

October

Paris Number

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The SMART SET

*A Magazine of
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For a Title to
the Story on
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The Paris of the French
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The Smart Set of Paris



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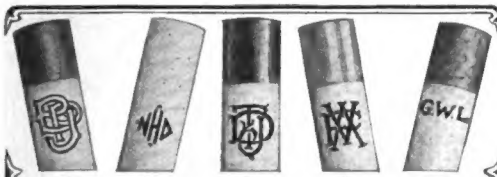
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In the sixteenth century this building occupied with its annexes and adjoining edifices a great quadrangular space, and finally became a part of the possessions of the famous family of Guise.

François de Lorraine, the Duc de Guise who was murdered by a Protestant fanatic near Orleans, pulled most of these buildings down and built a vast Hôtel de Guise on their site. This famous mansion became the cradle of the Ligue, and here the plotters issued the order for the Massacre of St. Bartholomew. It was from one of the windows of this palace that Henri de Guise—known as “le Balafre”—hurled the handsome Comte de St. Magrim, whom he discovered in the chamber of his wife, Catherine de Clèves, and whom he caused to be assassinated a few days after in the Rue Saint Honoré. Hither Henri III sent to implore help from the Duc de Guise in quelling a threatened revolution, and here the Duc issued an order which was productive of instant calm, after which the people cried so constantly, “Vive Guise! Vive Guise!” that at length their idol thought it necessary to say, “C’est assez, messieurs; c’est trop; criez un peu, Vive le roi!” This triumph was too great for a subject.

In 1700 the building once more changed its name, becoming the property of Madame de Soubise, at that time favorite of the moment with Louis XIV. A great court of honor surrounded by arcades was built—and is still standing—and the hôtel became noted as the scene of magnificent entertainments.

Shortly after 1800 the building was devoted to state uses and became the seat of the National Archives. Many documents relative to the history of France as far back as the Merovingian and Carolingian kings are to be seen here.



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A SENTIMENTAL DRAGON

By Nina Larrey Duryea

JEHAN DE REIZET ran down the wide stone steps leading to the court of his cousin's house in the Faubourg St. Honoré, aware that the two lackeys watched him curiously from the open door. They had doubtless heard the Duke's voice through that silent house, where suavity and wit were more in harmony with its stately beauty than rancorous argument.

The path of yellow light in which De Reizet walked was suddenly blotted out as the door closed behind him. A lamp burned dimly under the arch leading to the street, and the uniformed *concierge* opened the great gates emblazoned with the Petrinac arms with a friendly smile. It was midnight and the pavement was slimy with mud. A rim of moon hung in a watery sky between the roofs, and the street, congested during the day by traffic, was now so deserted and silent that the young man's footsteps echoed with exaggerated sound.

Turning to the left, he found himself in the Rue St. Roche, in the shadow of the ancient church. Suddenly from a tunnelliike entrance to an apartment house darted four figures. They apparently pursued no one, yet fled as from some horror. De Reizet stood rooted to the pavement with astonishment as they sped beneath a street lamp. One of

them was a chef in white cap and apron, who outdistanced a puffing *concierge*, a woman in a red flannel petticoat and lastly a smart feminine figure in discreet black, who ran with dignity, holding her skirt high above her ankles. All four turned the corner and darkness and silence swallowed them.

De Reizet wondered what deed of violence was being done. He grasped his heavy walking stick and sped also around the corner, to find himself in the midst of four gesticulating, palpitating figures grouped about an iron post whereon was stationed a fire alarm box. The stout lady in the red petticoat was speaking, waving both arms in the face of the *concierge*. "No, it is not I who will give thee liberty to take another wife to thy bosom!"

"Nor will I oblige thee by departing from this world," he replied. He turned to the chef. "It is you, Philippe, who must break that glass and sound the alarm, for your mistresses can easily replace you, and no one—"

De Reizet felt a light touch on his sleeve. He turned to find the neat figure in discreet black at his elbow, her comely face, with its faint mustache, alert and self-possessed beneath its round hat and veil.

"Monsieur will pardon me? Mon-

sieur perhaps does not care longer to live?" She spoke hopefully.

Jehan stared at her in astonished indignation. "But I most certainly do care to live!" he replied emphatically.

"Alas! What then shall be done?" she continued helplessly. "It means death to him who breaks glass on Saint Landri's Day, before the year is out. Yet the house burns."

"Yes, yes, the house is burning!" they all wailed in different keys of hysterical despair. "Even now it burns while we stand here, yet there is none to break the glass, for life is sweet."

Light dawned on Jehan's bewildered brain as he recalled the superstition. "Idiots!" he cried. Lifting his stick, he shattered the glass and sounded the alarm, while the lady in black muttered a prayer for his soul, so soon to depart to celestial bliss. Then the four turned and sped whence they had come, Jehan following. Before the house they all paused. All was dark and still, but the fat *concierge* pointed to a thin stream of smoke which issued from a dormer window. Doors were banged by desperate fists; bells pealed; cries resounded. In a moment the tranquillity of that sleeping house was a bedlam of uproar and confusion. Doors were flung open. Dishveled heads appeared. Jehan glimpsed interiors of elegance and poverty as he mounted. He heard cries from the street below and the sound of hurrying feet and windows opening opposite, and wondered how long before the fire engine would appear. An old woman came trembling onto the landing in a gray flannel wrapper, clutched at the rail and moaned with helpless fear. Jehan swept her into his strong arms and carried her to the street. A middle-aged gentleman in a white nightshirt and cap appeared, carrying a lighted candle carefully shaded by his palsied hand, which he tenderly set in a corner out of harm's way. A lady with brazen hair ran into the street clad in a pink *peignoir* and threw strangling arms about Jehan's neck clamoring for protection. From a third story window the discreet person in black was discovered, throwing out table silver, fine

clothing and pictures with an energetic hand.

Meanwhile the smoke continued to curl lazily skyward. Just then the rattling thunder of the engine was heard approaching. Gendarmes cleared a space, pressing back the crowd into a solid wall. Into this open space there suddenly shot a long-haired youth, propelled from the entrance of the house by the stout arm of the chef. The youth's face was distorted with rage, and his arms rotated like a windmill as he stamped and cursed impotently. At last the youth evidently made himself understood; word passed from lip to lip, while consternation became plain on the faces of his listeners and the uproar suddenly ceased.

Again Jehan felt a touch on his arm. Again the woman was at his elbow. Her face, white with exhaustion and begrimed from her exertions, wore an enigmatical expression. "Monsieur," she said quickly in his ears, "there is a time for courage, and a time for discretion. May I suggest that this is the moment for departure from this painful scene?"

Her hand was laid firmly on his, and, as though hypnotized, he was led out of the crowd, which, mysteriously, now appeared to be stirred by the same spirit of wrath that had driven the long-haired youth to frenzy. They gained a quiet street. Then the woman fell suddenly back against the wall of a house and covered her face with her hands, with a sound of convulsed sobbing.

De Reizet was a brave man, but the present scene appalled him. What was a man to do, at one in the morning, with a woman who, in tears and disordered attire, clung to a wall, wordless and distraught? He spoke soothingly, and even ventured to lay a consoling hand on hers. She clung to it convulsively and left her face revealed. It was convulsed with laughter.

"Oh, *mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*" she cried between breaths. "What a situation! There was no fire. The house did not burn. It was only the poor youth burning his love letters in his garret, which had no chimney. To think that those tender sentiments going out that

window in smoke should cause such havoc!"

Fresh laughter shook her, in which Jehan now joined somewhat ruefully, with apprehensive glances up and down the street. Retribution might at any moment overtake them. He spoke sternly.

"Madame, it is now midnight. May I find you a cab?"

She sobered at once. "Certainly, if monsieur will be so kind."

They moved along the empty street in silence. His companion seemed deep in thought and sighed impressively. Jehan saw that her face was white and tired, and was stricken with remorse. "You sigh," he remarked politely—"doubtless from fatigue. If there were a restaurant near—"

They found a small place nearby and entered. His companion proved interesting, and he rather enjoyed the lark.

"Monsieur finds it droll?" she asked. "Life would be dull indeed were it not for such little relief from our responsibilities. Mine ended at ten this evening, and recommence tomorrow at eight." She sighed and dallied with the mustard pot.

"You speak of responsibilities," said Jehan politely. "Might I venture to inquire their nature?"

She hesitated, searching for words with which to veil facts. "Mine is the greatest responsibility a woman of delicacy can have: the charge of a young and beautiful girl. I am, monsieur, the *dame de compagnie* of such a one, an angel, though she does come from that *pays sauvage* called America. But she was educated at the Sacré Cœur here in Paris, and thus has acquired all the graces and accomplishments. I am her protector, her dragon of the watchful eye."

De Reizet's quizzical smile brought her tongue to a standstill. "Could she see you now—"

She stared at him aghast with a sudden idea. "Can monsieur by chance know her?"

"Be reassured. I have no more idea of her identity than I have of yours."

"May I inquire," she asked as they

went out in the street again and he hailed a disreputable *fiacre* that was passing, "whether monsieur goes toward the Étoile? If so, might I suggest that we go together? I can leave monsieur where he wishes and proceed alone."

De Reizet gave the driver directions, squeezed himself in beside her and the door slammed, leaving them in darkness. His companion discoursed with aplomb and intelligence as they proceeded. Presently the cab drew up at a corner and De Reizet got out. "We part to meet no more," she said. "I go; I disappear; the sea of life reclaims me. *Adieu.*"

She sank back into the obscurity of the cab; the door closed and De Reizet was alone. He crossed the Champs Élysées and struck into the Avenue Montaigne. As he did so, he saw a cab turn into the street on which the garden of his own house abutted. On the corner he paused, gazing after the vanishing vehicle. He saw a somber figure descend and enter a new and splendid house. De Reizet stood rooted to the pavement.

Then he swore softly in the darkness. "The devil take her! All is clear. It is those rich Americans who insist that I sell them my land, though my home be on it, that they may tear it to bits and add my garden to theirs!"

He passed round the high wall which formed the end of the street. Set in the wall was a small iron gate. This he opened with a key and softly closed behind him. Once within, ugly realities seemed left behind.

De Reizet drew a deep breath and gazed about his domain as though it had been lost and was now regained. He felt that the encounter with the employee of his neighboring enemy had endangered his peace and weakened the wall of his antagonism. The mistress and her daughter he had never seen, but lawyers had begged, covertly threatened and harassed him at their bidding. From where he stood he glimpsed the rear wall of their blatant palace above the lilacs with wrathful eyes. Aside from his own disinclination to part with what had been the home of his family for three centuries, there lay a deeper reason

which they would never know and which he would not tell them.

He thought of his two old aunts now asleep within. He recalled their frightened eyes when he had told them of the proposition. So long had they lived their lives within that home and garden that the outside world seemed to them a wilderness filled with unknown terrors. Could he turn them out into an alien world where modernity would jar and rasp their delicate souls? They were like old lace, lavender-scented, only suited to their present environment of mellowed beauty and seclusion.

Once the house had been surrounded by a park, before thrift and necessity brought Paris to its doors. The modern quarter of the city had grown up about it, narrowing its precincts to this garden. Something redolent of the past clung to its simplicity. Ancient trees swayed against the casements. They had once shadowed gaiety and the elegance of great ladies and knightly cavaliers. A king had danced the minuet on the sward with an English princess where now violets peeped timidly as from a grave of poetic memories.

De Reizet sighed and let himself into the house. A candle burned in a silver stick, throwing grotesque shadows on the paneled ceiling of the old hall. The wide stairway curving upward with its wrought iron baluster was carpetless, though rugs of faded beauty covered the stone floor. One glimpsed formal *salons* on either side sparsely furnished and hung with portraits.

He took the candle and softly climbed the stairs. In the upper hall he paused, regarding with surprise a streak of light beneath the door of his younger brother's room. He gently turned the handle and paused in amazement. Before a table, his back to the door, was a boy about fifteen, wrapped in a red flannel bathrobe, his fair, tousled head supported in his hands, while a pen moved across paper uncertainly by the light of a solitary candle, burned almost to its socket. De Reizet advanced, and the boy sprang to his feet in embarrassment.

"Why, Jack!" said De Reizet in English. "What means this burning of the

midnight candle? Lessons? Though you were sent home from Eton because of anticipated measles there, you ought to keep something like your usual hours."

The boy hesitated. His hand went behind him to a sheet of paper which he warily crumpled into a ball and covered. But watching eyes saw the movement. "No, Jehan," the boy answered truthfully with a crimsoning face, "it's not exactly lessons."

De Reizet turned to a chair, and in a trice the ball of paper flew out of the window, but not too quick for a seemingly careless glance to note.

"Oh, well," said De Reizet, too tactful to force confidence, "we both seem to be playing owls tonight. Haven't you been to sleep at all?"

"With one eye," the boy replied. They both laughed, and the boy went to the door with an arm about his brother's shoulder to say good night. When the door closed, Jack stood still, running both hands through his hair. "That was a narrow shave! He almost caught me." He tiptoed to the window and looked down. On the grass, visible in the pale light of coming dawn, lay the ball of crumpled paper, half hidden by a bush. "I'll get it in the morning," thought the boy, and blowing out the sputtering candle, tumbled into bed.

Some moments later a stealthy figure stole down the stairs and out into the garden to the bush where the paper lay. The anxious elder brother read the following lines:

ADORED ANGEL:

I can no longer restrain that gushing fount of passion within my despairing heart. The glimpse of your loveliness flitting like a nymph beneath the trees has transformed my life of sluggish toil to one of joyful dreams. Be gracious and grant me an interview. I've a football match on tomorrow at Alincourt, but I'll be at the fence the next evening at eleven, when Jehan is at the German embassy. He's not much on sentiment. Bid me not despair. I live but for thee.

Thy wholly devoted

JACK.

P.S.—Do you like toffy? I have half a box left.

De Reizet perused this missive with care, then, crumpling it up once more, he replaced it beneath the bush and re-

turned to his room. Who, he wondered, was the goddess? His hopeful young brother was losing no time. Doubtless the nymph was someone at his dancing class.

II

Mrs. BRADISH, having in her youth experienced the annoyances of mediocrity, in middle age enjoyed the sweets of power. The great house she had built on the Avenue Montaigne was a model of beauty and luxurious comfort.

Mrs. Bradish's day began with the entrance of her chef to learn her wishes for the day's meals. He was succeeded by the housekeeper, the chauffeur, tradespeople from the Rue de la Paix, and lastly by her secretary.

On this September morning her daughter entered early, clad in her riding habit. Her charming face, which could not boast one line of classic beauty, glowed like a rose beneath her stiff hat, and her brown hair was in tendrils about her small ears.

Mrs. Bradish waved a freshly manicured hand. "Go dress and return at eleven to accompany me to Drécoll's. I overheard Mrs. Francis-Bray say that she had a fitting there at half past eleven. An excellent opportunity for a word with her, and perhaps a chance to introduce you."

The girl smiled, but her eyes lost their sunshiny gleam. "Dear mother, do let me off. I've enough clothes, and I do so want to run out to La Boulie for a round of golf. Surely we know enough people."

Mrs. Bradish peered through her diamond-studded lorgnette with a puzzled frown. "What makes you so odd, I wonder?" she said slowly. "Haven't you any natural ambition? Self-respect demands the best in everything, from material things to social matters; and, my dear, if you are too lazy to acquire them for yourself, you should be thankful that you have a mother to assist you."

"But, mother dear, it depends on what you call the 'best.' My idea of 'best' isn't yours. Your idea of life doesn't suit me any more than my sports

and prowls in dusty museums suit you. These endless parties of middle-aged women with their bridge and squabbles get on my nerves."

"Oh, you are so like your poor dear father. If we'd followed his ideas we'd still be living in Utica, with a church sociable as our chief gaiety. Of course I loved and respected your father, but when he died I felt that my time had come. You can't say I haven't hustled."

Sylvia nodded. "You certainly have, mother. You make me feel sometimes like a grain of popcorn on a hot shovel."

Mrs. Bradish raised protesting hands. "Now run away and be here at eleven. Wear your gray dress with the big black hat. It shows off your figure and looks distinguished."

It was true Mrs. Bradish had hustled, and to some purpose. She had been born with a brain of phenomenal acumen. Her father had been a school teacher in the town of Utica, New York, and had given his child a good education. Ambition was born within her, and when her young married life threatened to enclose her in a smother of petty duties and economies, her spirit had chafed against the bars.

At first she had hardly known what it was she so vividly desired, but time ripened her aspirations. Observation and experience taught her that power was the key which unlocked all doors save those of Heaven, and that money was its concrete essence. Her husband, cashier of the local bank, with a salary of two thousand dollars a year, had been contented enough, and asked nothing better in life than his wife's affection, the love of his child, apple pie twice a week and that his carpet slippers should be warmed before the stove on winter nights. These modest desires had been faithfully gratified, and when an elusive microbe poisoned his blood and he succumbed, she mourned him sincerely and went without a new fur coat to pay for a tombstone worthy of his virtues.

It was soon after that the great idea dawned which was to transform her life from comparative penury to its present opulence. In her little sewing room, where she fashioned most of her own and

Sylvia's garments, there stood on a pine table a dummy, on which she fitted waists. It was a clumsy thing, covered with black cotton and stuffed with excelsior. Its impossibly small waist and Venuslike bust were the source of endless torment, and when not in use no spare corner seemed large enough to conceal its bulk.

Then the great thought came to her. What an excellent thing if that dummy could collapse! The idea took root and germinated. Ways and means evolved themselves in her acute brain. If the shape was made of rubber, with a hole by which an ordinary bicycle pump could inflate it, and a strong covering be made to exactly fit her, and put thereon—presto, her own figure would appear, exactly duplicated. Air and not excelsior would fill out every curve of the lining. A steel rod could be run through it from top to bottom. When not in use, the cap could be removed, the air could escape and lo, only a rubber shape, a rod and bit of wood would remain to pack away with ease.

Sylvia, then four years old, still remembered her mother before the kitchen table, curtains drawn, cutting and gumming that first elastic shape. At last the affair was completed, and an old waist was buttoned on. A bicycle pump was secured, and presto, before their eyes stood her mother's own self duplicated.

The president of the bank where Mr. Bradish had formerly been cashier advised a patent, and advanced the necessary money. Then a local manufacturer began to make them in small quantities and place them at the principal shops of Utica.

The proud inventor never forgot her trembling joy when for the first time she saw the "Idea," as she named it, demonstrated by a pert young woman at Clark's Emporium. They sold like hot cakes. In a year the original manufacturer, who had previously made rubber bags, forsook them and made this his sole product.

The Idea was a clever contrivance, its method of exploitation clever; but the cleverest thing of all was her own silence.

No human being but Sylvia, the bank president and the Patent Office at Washington knew whence Mrs. Bradish derived her sudden and ever increasing wealth. Her next brilliant move was to Europe, where her daughter entered the convent of the *Sacré Cœur* in Paris.

When Sylvia was sixteen Mrs. Bradish came to Paris and took her bearings, armed with a few desirable letters of introduction. These started her, and her own momentum carried her along.

She soon found that the American colony as a whole was hardly worth while, though containing many charming people whom she desired to know. She met large numbers of neutral-tinted women in expensive clothes, who apparently came from nowhere in particular and anticipated nothing more than winning a few francs at bridge.

With skill she began slowly to eliminate, making of course enemies in the process—often bored to bitterness, for she was too intelligent to enjoy long an idealess society.

But she loved her daughter. It was a passion with her that this young girl should have all her own girlhood had lacked. It never occurred to her that she for whom she toiled might not care a jot for these things. Therein lay the tragedy of which she was beginning to be dimly aware.

A year before Sylvia left school Mrs. Bradish struck out boldly. She built a palace on the Avenue Montaigne, and on the evening of her daughter's *début* gave a ball at which the diplomatic corps, most of the worth-whiles of the American colony and a few good French appeared. They all voted Sylvia a charming young creature, and the girl, fresh from the sequestered peace of a convent, found herself in a vortex of gaiety.

As time passed Sylvia adroitly managed to arrange her own life, giving part to her mother's social exigencies but retaining a part for the gratification of her own tastes. She joined the clubs of Puteaux and La Bouliè, where she played tennis and golf with nice young men of sporting tastes. She and Madame Petan, her companion, dived into the Paris of art, history and romance, which

lured the girl's imagination and roused her ideality to life.

This morning the prospect of the hours ahead filled her with annoyance. For the first time in many days the world was radiant with sunshine, and she wanted to enjoy it. However, at eleven she appeared, smart and fresh, in her mother's dressing room. The latter kept up a monologue in mixed French and English as the final details of her toilette were completed.

They descended the splendid stair to the motor and whirled out into the vivid sunlight. As they passed the high stone wall of their neighbor's garden, Mrs. Bradish looked up with jealous eyes.

"He's an idiot, that Monsieur de Reizet, not to accept two hundred and fifty thousand francs for that old house and garden. No one but an aristocratic crank could live in that shabby affair. The windows sag and the drafts must be shocking."

They glided down the Champs Elysées between the "islands" on which nervous pedestrians clustered amid the rushing motors which swept by them in dizzying multiplicity, and turned into the Place de la Concorde. Suddenly Mrs. Bradish leaned forward and seized the speaking tube. "*A gauche, Gustave. Arrêtez-vous au coin.*" Sylvia, there is the Duc de Petrinac. The very man I wanted to see. And who is that good-looking man with him—so smart and distinguished?"

The motor drew up to the curb. Sylvia saw the Duke speak hurriedly to his companion, who looked toward them indifferently and shook his head. Sylvia met a glance from two grave eyes, and saw their expression of kindness change to one of hostility. He lifted his hat and went on to the club at the corner. The Duke, at Mrs. Bradish's invitation, entered the motor and pulled down the little seat opposite Sylvia.

Sylvia had heard much of this man and his famous house in the Faubourg St. Honoré. Although he frequented their house and was invariably pleasant, she had never liked him, but her sympathetic interest had been caught by the romantic story of his absorbing love for

Margot, a little girl he had legally adopted. Her origin was only surmised, but the pretty little creature appeared frankly with him on all occasions, and even accompanied him on visits and long journeys. Great ladies, more than willing to be kind to this nobleman who bore one of the greatest names in France, found it surprisingly easy to love Margot for her own sake as well.

"How fortunate we met you!" Mrs. Bradish was saying in excellent French. "I am devoured with curiosity as to the outcome of your interview with your cousin, Monsieur de Reizet."

"Alas, madame, I regret to be the bearer of bad news. My cousin is adamant. A most unreasonable man, who refuses to see where his own interests lie. He refuses because of a sentiment. It is his home, he says, and will remain so. Now if he could meet you and your daughter, I am sure he would change his mind, but unfortunately he is old-fashioned and dislikes meeting strangers. He works very hard, being in our War Office. That was he with whom I was walking."

Mrs. Bradish opened her eyes wide, but controlled her irritation. The Duke was useful and an excellent ladder by which to reach social summits. She had for a long time desired to meet his friends of the old regime, but she knew that his suavity and willingness to partake of her hospitality was a far cry from offering his. Teas at the Ritz, to which he invited only Americans, and such impersonal entertainments he did offer, but so far he had skillfully avoided introducing her to his own world.

She could not, of course, be aware that he awaited a report from America as to her fortune. The Duke was rich in estates, but very hard pushed for income, and was seriously considering this clever woman's daughter as a matrimonial venture. He felt, however, with a Latin's unerring sensibility, Sylvia's disapprobation.

Their agreeable conversation was cut short at Drécoll's. The Duke accepted an invitation to dine the following week and bowed them to the lift. As Mrs. Bradish was about to touch the button

to ascend, Mrs. Francis-Bray's quietly appointed brougham stopped before the door, and she walked into the waiting web like a kindly disposed fly, to be greeted by a quiet "Good morning" from Mrs. Bradish, as free from eagerness as though no joy filled a spidery breast. Sylvia was not at once introduced—Mrs. Bradish was not crude in her methods, and light remarks were exchanged.

Mrs. Francis-Bray was too well bred and kind of heart to suspect motives, and when they got out of the lift, and Sylvia, as an apparent afterthought, was presented, the former's trained eye appreciated the girl's grace and beauty. Mrs. Bradish tactfully drifted away, and Sylvia found herself chatting at her ease with the woman she had so long admired. When Mrs. Bradish rejoined them, Mrs. Francis-Bray patted Sylvia's arm affectionately. "Come and see me. I'm at home on Tuesdays." She nodded and was gone, her erect figure and gray, distinguished head drawing admiring glances.

In the motor Mrs. Bradish expressed her gratification, but added: "Odd she didn't include me in her invitation, but of course it was taken for granted. We won't go for a couple of weeks, and when we do, we won't dress much. It looks too anxious. There is nothing so socially fastidious in Europe as a Knickerbocker. They'd patronize William the Conqueror and give Adam points on old families."

III

AUNT AGATHE nodded to Aunt Cecile, and both rose from their high-backed chairs at the ends of the dinner table. Jehan and Jack rose also, and with the automatic movements of long practice, handed each her ebony staff, as the two serving men in black livery, chevrons and buckled shoes pulled back chairs and threw wide the doors. A hound, stiff with age, rose from before the dying embers and preceded the little procession into the *salon*.

This evening Jack was ill at ease, and his glance wandered perpetually to the

clock, wondering when Jehan would take himself off to the reception at the German embassy.

Only ten! A whole hour to wait before his angel would keep the tryst. Would she come? After all, he was only a boy and she a grown-up. Perhaps she would allow him to touch her hand through the grille. Of what should he talk? Girls were queer, and knew little of sensible things like football and cricket. At a pinch he might talk about dress. He scanned his aunts' lappets and mitts for material, but remembered with a sigh that his goddess wore neither.

Suddenly his thoughts were recalled by hearing Jehan say: "No, I don't like it. The Foreign Office is already suspicious. There is treachery somewhere, for Germany knows more of the matter than she should."

"Germany, Jehan!" said Jack. "What's the trouble?"

De Reizet knocked his cigarette ash into his coffee cup with a worried frown. "You see, I brought to our Minister of War a most interesting and valuable invention—a tissue resembling paper, but which doesn't tear. Yet it washes and irons, and can be sewn like cloth. Being made like paper, it has neither bulk, weight, warp or woof, yet is warmer than the thickest woven tissue. Our government wants it for army coats, caps, blankets and even tents. It would give an army on the march an immense advantage."

"But where do you come in, Jehan?" asked Jack.

"Between the inventor in Amsterdam and the Minister of War. It was I who discovered it and took it to the War Office, and if the negotiations go through I'll make quite a fortune out of it. I'll have to go to Amsterdam to see the genius, a bedridden Pole, and find out whether I can't bring back the secret of the solution with me."

De Reizet rose. "I'm off to the embassy. I agreed to meet Paul there to give him the latest news about the affair. He takes a great interest in it on my account. Off to bed, Jack?"

The boy rose and followed Jehan out to the terrace, looking up at the cloud-

ing sky. "Oh, dear," he said, "I do believe it's going to rain again."

De Reizet looked earnestly into the upturned face of the boy, gave him an affectionate pat and ran down the steps. Jack heard the gate click and drew a deep breath of relief.

At last! Below him lay the garden, a place of mystery and allure. With a beating heart the boy ran down the steps and across the sward to the high iron grille which divided their domain from that of their American neighbors. He heard the clock strike eleven far away, muffled by the sound of a magnificent tenor voice singing to an orchestra from the white palace next door. A sound of applause followed and then the silence closed round him again like a velvet pall. The seconds stretched to minutes. Then he heard a step on the gravel path on the other side of the fence and discerned a slender white figure coming toward him. Fright seized him. The longed-for moment was his, yet he longed to fly. A soft laugh shocked him to self-possession. "Well," remarked his goddess, "I'm here! Got the toffy?"

"Mademoiselle," he stammered, "believe me not ungrateful. This honor overwhelms me. My feelings—er—er—oh, hang it, I can't talk spoony. It's ripping of you to come. Of course I've got the toffy. Here it is. It's sticky; mind your gown."

Their fingers met through the bars and he forgot to thrill. He heard the paper rustle and the sound of lips smacking. "It's good," his goddess remarked inarticulately. "I had a hard time getting away. Mother has a musicale on. Do you like parties?"

"Never been to any," said Jack, "but I don't think I'd like them."

"Neither do I. But mother does. What a pity she and your brother don't get on, for then you and I might have no end of a good time. She'd be angry if she knew what I was doing. She thinks I'm flirting with the Duke, your cousin, on the stairs. I inveigled him to the buffet, and vanished."

"Jehan would be madder than your mother," said Jack. "But then he never saw you."

"Oh, yes, he has. This very morning. He was with your cousin, but scuttled off as though our motor had the plague inside. Your brother doesn't like Americans, does he?"

"He hasn't known any like you. He says they aren't simple enough. He is awfully simple, you know—not in his head but his ways."

"Madame Petan says—"

"Who's she?"

"My *dame de compagnie*. There's nothing simple about her. She's so complicated one has to draw a diagram to explain her. And proper—I don't believe she ever talked to a man alone in her life! She's a dear, but a dragon as a chaperon. If she could see me now—"

"I wish I could. It's so beastly dark. I say, I like you. Did you know that for a month I've dodged behind trees in the Bois just to see you pass?"

"You dear!"

"And we'll be friends?"

"We are."

"I say, couldn't you wait and marry me? I'm fifteen."

"And I'm five years older. I might adopt you. Then, too, Madame Petan says that marriages between American girls and Frenchmen are arranged by the devil."

"Hang Madame Petan! Besides, I'm just like an Englishman. I tell the truth, use lots of soap and water and like only one girl at a time."

"An American likes one girl *all* the time."

"Don't you believe it. Jehan says that Americans are just like everyone else, only worse, because they pretend to be better."

"Your brother must be detestable."

"Not much. And he's a corker at golf."

"And your aunts—"

"They're corks, too—at being ladies."

"They look adorable. But, Jack, I must go. They're sure to miss me."

"Oh, not yet. It's been only a minute. When shall I see you again? And before you go you must see my rabbits. They do tricks. Wait." Jack vanished in the darkness and came back with what

seemed to be the ghastly front half of a rabbit in his arms.

"What have you got?" cried Sylvia, pushing her hand through the bars. "Hasn't it but half a body?"

Jack laughed. "It's all there. The rest is black and doesn't show in the dark. Feel."

Her touch reassured her. Jack bent and quickly laid a butterfly kiss on the little hand resting on his pet, and said, to cover his shyness: "He has a wife and six children. They live in the pen at the end of the fence."

"The darlings! I used to have them at Utica. Oh, dear, I wonder if you and I can be really friends—daylight friends? I can't stand the grown-up Frenchmen any more than your brother can stand American women. They make love on a few minutes' acquaintance. It's insulting to one's intelligence to be told one is adored when the man hasn't gotten acquainted with anything but the size of one's *dot*."

"And I, too," said Jack. "You see, little girls are silly; the boys in France are muffs; men don't want to bother with me, and I've no one but Jehan who understands things. Couldn't we meet in the Bois sometimes or go to places? There is the Nouveau Cirque—"

"I can't often get out alone," sighed Sylvia. "There is Madame Petan. If she found it out she'd tell mother."

"But—"

"S—sh!" said Sylvia softly. "I'm sure I heard a step."

Both stood motionless with bated breath, but all was silence. Sylvia put her hand through the bars. Jack clasped it and carried it to his lips. Darkness gave him courage, and he kissed the soft palm repeatedly with ardor. She withdrew her hand and plucked a rose from her breast, laid it against her lips and passed it through the grille. "There—a *guerdon*."

Jack bent low above the rose and the hand; he felt a light touch on his curls as he whispered: "I'll leave a note under this rock. Watch out."

Sylvia sped swiftly up the rear staircase straight into the arms of Madame Petan. This lady eyed her sharply.

"Mademoiselle, where have you been? Your hair—where is the red rose which so admirably set off your white dress?"

Sylvia avoided the dragon's eye and smoothed her dampened tresses. "It was so hot, dear Petan. I just went out for a moment. Don't be cross. The rose—where can it be?" She looked about with surprised eyes as though roses grew on the tiled walls of the passage, then, bestowing a kiss on the older woman's cheek, fled.

Petan looked after the vanishing figure with an enigmatical expression and collapsed on a chair. She, too, had been out, not for air or to bestow a rose, but behind a laurel bush, participating in what she had supposed to be a clandestine tryst between her charge and a De Reizet. But she erred in one essential: she had mistaken Jack for Jehan. In that lay all the difference. Romance was Madame Petan's consuming passion, all unsuspected by an indifferent world. She enjoyed the situation as it appeared to her: Sylvia, young, fair, rich; De Reizet, noble, distinguished, adoring; both the victims of a false and ridiculous situation. The houses of Capulet and Montague, and two hearts surmounting obstacles to their love. What an idyll! They were made for one another.

It must here be made clear that Petan, though familiar with the history of Monsieur de Reizet, had never seen that gentleman to identify him, nor had she any idea that the hero of her midnight adventure was one and the same with the supposed lover on the other side of the fence. She pondered as to the most tactful course to pursue. If Sylvia failed to confide her secret to her indulgent discretion or to her mother's certain wrath, could she, Petan, admit that she had failed to await that confidence to be freely bestowed, but had stolen it from behind a laurel bush? Her position in the affair lacked dignity.

On the other hand, if confidence was not established between them, heaven only knew what the girl might do. Her own dragon's eyes had to close occasionally in sleep, and Mrs. Bradish also made demands upon her time. Sylvia, in

American fashion, was often allowed to go out alone, and conventions might at any time be forgotten.

But Mrs. Bradish! Petan trembled. If she learned of the situation, then indeed would the heavens fall. She recalled that lady's disappointment regarding her acquisition of her neighbor's land, her wrath at the suave and restrained quality of his refusals and the unjust motives she had assigned to him because of them.

But the discreet person for once revolted against discretion. With the instinct of the born gambler, she left matters to chance. Meanwhile she would watch and wait for the psychological moment to have it out with the reckless maid. She would also see that matters were not carried to excess. From behind that bush, when she had listened to the sound of a kiss on a white hand, youth had brought back to her youth's dreams. Sentiment had supplied her imagination with what she failed to hear, and it had lost nothing in the process.

Petan returned to the house, and from the upper gallery saw Sylvia sitting, still lost in dreams, while a tenor from the Opera sang of life and death in inarticulate Italian. The Duke sat by her, gazing ardently at nothing, his thoughts busy with hidden egotisms, caring not a fig for the young girl, her purity, her individual right to love and be loved. He glanced at her slim hands, in which he saw a purse of inexhaustible gold, and his eyes gleamed beneath their narrowed lids.

Sylvia's thoughts were again out in the cool peace of the garden, with innocent lips on her hand and an ardent young voice saying, "We will be friends?" Then that vision of a boy's face seemed to melt and change. The outlines grew stronger, older. The same honest eyes were looking into hers, but these eyes were deeper, graver and held hostility. She wanted to tell him that she understood he had not refused to part from his home for sordid reasons, and that her mother's rancor was not shared by her. She desired him to know that she comprehended everything: his indifference to mere wealth, even his contempt for

such standards as he thought she shared with her mother. He must know that she, too, could venerate tradition, though she had none of her own beyond simple honor.

The music ceased as she opened her eyes. The Duke no longer gazed ardently at nothing, but into Sylvia's eyes.

IV

At the corner of the Rue Royale, the Duc de Petrinac stuck his head out of his cab, removing first his silk hat to protect it from the falling rain, and shouted, "To the Bon Marché," and drew quickly back, pulling down the frayed curtain. He sat uneasily on the edge of the seat, his yellow-gloved hands crossed on his cane, gnawing his underlip nervously. The Rue du Bac seemed to him uncommonly long, in his impatience and fear of being seen on this errand; and arrived before the door of that emporium, he failed to wait for change from the cabman but ran hastily up the steps.

At that hour the great shop was comparatively free from customers. He scanned the counters with a hawklike glance and suddenly paused. Before him conspicuously displayed was a dummy of a woman's headless torso. Beside it lay a number of little bundles tied with pink ribbon. Above them hung a sign, resplendent in scarlet type—"The Idea." The Duke touched the form warily as though fearing an explosion. The smiling clerk leaned over the counter. "Monsieur desires to see the American novelty, an admirable substitution for the old form of ponderous weight and bulk? Behold!"

With deft fingers the clerk turned a small button, and tenderly embracing the figure, pressed it to his bosom. A hissing sound was heard, as though the spirit within voiced scorn of its ardent wooer. The Duke stared while the charming waist and rounded bust dissolved from view, as though an effective anti-fat was working the wonder. In a moment nothing remained but a shapeless sack and a slender rod on a bit of wood. The salesman manipulated them,

and lo, they, too, were a neat, little package tied with pink ribbon. The "Idea" had vanished.

The Duke's sallow cheeks flushed as he gazed with admiration at the performance. "Fifteen francs, monsieur, and it will do for monsieur's entire family. His wife, his charming daughters, all may be duplicated at will. Thousands have been sold. Duchesses and modistes all clamor for them. Monsieur's family may travel in uncivilized wilds, yet leave at their modiste's their counterpart whereon fresh toilettes may be created. No more irksome fittings. The Idea graciously does the drudgery, silently, uncomplainingly. When its duty is done, the Idea retires—fades modestly into this trifling package." He flourished it within an inch of the Duke's aristocratic nose as the latter murmured: "Astonishing woman! What a brain!"

The clerk looked puzzled. "Brain? It needs not a brain. Monsieur would not expect a brain to be included for fifteen francs. It is this which takes the place of a brain."

The Duke saw the shapeless mass shaken out, a diminutive instrument resembling a bicycle pump inserted in a tiny hole and the Idea quickly regain its former outlines of abundant health. Another lining was put on, less graceful of outline, and a stout figure appeared, motherly and broad.

"Monsieur sees that I speak the truth. Virtue, personified by this article, needs no praise from others. It speaks for itself."

It did. The escaping air whistled like a pæan of self-praise. The Duke listened, an odd expression on his face.

"You say many are sold?"

"Thousands. Here is the circular. Monsieur will see testimonials from queens of rank, fashion and the stage. All Europe clamors for it. It is difficult to fill our orders and—"

"I will take one," said the Duke. He was, in truth, bewildered. That a palace, jewels, motors and all the paraphernalia of social power could emanate from that little package seemed an anomaly. He saw the Idea in every corner of the

globe, a stream of gold flowing from it and himself bathing in that revivifying stream.

He followed the clerk to the desk to pay, according to that annoying French custom, and while endeavoring to pick up change with his gloved fingers, a black-gloved hand deftly restored the coin with a murmured, "Permit me, Monsieur le Duc." He glanced up and saw Madame Petan regarding him and his bundle with an enigmatical smile.

"Monsieur has purchased one of those admirable Ideas? I congratulate monsieur on his wisdom in possessing so useful an article."

The Duke knew in a flash that Madame Petan was laughing at him behind her grave politeness. Of course she wondered why he had come so far to purchase such an object, as no wife or daughter could claim its use. His mind worked quickly. What did she know? What did she suspect? He was inwardly furious, for if it was repeated to Mrs. Bradish it would open up an avenue of conjecture which he desired above all else to avoid. He knew that the source of her fortune was a mystery, and that his methods of discovering it were open to criticism. No one likes to have what he desires to conceal discovered, and often these Americans were oddly sensitive regarding the sources of their wealth. Trade to him was trade, nor could he conceive of an aristocracy in business. Whether one sold Ideas, carpets, coffins or corner lots was a matter of indifference to him as long as profits were superlative. He saw no ignominy in spending money earned by a wife, no matter what its source. Once to his credit in a bank it became exempt from criticism. As marriage with him would ennoble his wife, so would it ennoble her bank account. The past year had shown him the difficulty of his own financial position, and it was sufficiently serious to cause him many sleepless nights. No one knew of the brink on which he stood.

He deemed it expedient to learn what might be in Madame Petan's mind. He knew there was no communication between Mrs. Bradish's household and that of his cousin's, so without searching

farther afield for an explanation, he remarked casually that the Idea was indeed admirable and that he had been commissioned by the two old ladies to buy one for them, as fittings proved fatiguing.

Now one liar usually possesses the gift of detecting another. Petan, conscientiously devoted where her affections were engaged, was on occasion a gifted and adroit perverter of the truth. The nobleman's suave lie she ignored, but the fact that he had found it necessary to lie at all gave her the scent. She knew at once that he had discovered the source of Mrs. Bradish's wealth and that his interest was personal. She knew Mrs. Bradish's worldly ambitions, the Duke's increasing ardor and also Margot's existence in his bachelor establishment. Her loyal soul rose in revolt. Never should her angel be sacrificed if she could help it. Her former aversion changed in that instant to an invincible dislike. She moved along beside the Duke, adroitly directing their progress through crowded aisles to prolong their intercourse.

"As you say, monsieur, the Idea is excellent. They say an American invented it. But such things are quickly improved upon, and their earning capacity soon ends."

"Ah, do you think so?" he replied, and there was a note of dismay in his voice. "However, the patentee should make a fortune in any case."

"How can one tell who really has a fortune? Do we not know in this Paris life that many supposed fortunes are bubbles, and like them, vanish?"

Petrinac stroked the upcurled ends of his mustache, wondering whether she spoke generally or personally. After all, she was a dull creature. "The stability of fortunes is easily ascertained," he said, thinking aloud, careless of his listener, who mentally grinned at his tacit admission that he had been manipulating financial tricks. "The worm!" she thought. They passed a toy counter, and he abruptly raised his hat to her as a finale to their conversation.

When she reached home she entered the courtyard and was surprised to see

the double doors open and hear excited voices. She hastened across and stood transfixed on the steps looking into the hall. Directly opposite, the double staircase mounted, each flank below banked by exotic plants. Before these were ranged eight rabbits, sleek and fat, nibbling at their ease. In the center of the hall stood Mrs. Bradish, her thin face flushed with anger, while before her were ranged in a row the chef, three footmen, the butler, two housemaids and the gardener, all plainly terrified as their mistress vented her wrath in fluent French. Now and then one of the footmen dived for a rabbit, which evaded him skillfully and returned to its feast.

"I must know who brought these animals here!" cried Mrs. Bradish. "Alphonse, do you swear that you did not intend to stew them on my fire to carry home at night? Come, the truth!"

Alphonse clasped his hands over his protuberant white waist with dignity. "I have no family, nor do I eat rabbits. They are not fit for an aristocratic stomach. I know no more of these beasts than does Napoleon in yonder tomb. I proclaim my innocence."

He waved his hand with a tragic gesture as a rabbit loped between his legs. He dived for it, as did one of the maids. It was like a signal. The row of suspects dissolved, and in an instant the hall presented an odd spectacle. The eight rabbits fled hither and thither, ears laid back and pink eyes distended, while shouts, squeals, appeals to heaven and curses mingled. Just then Petan glanced to the head of the stairs and spied Sylvia convulsed with laughter. As the last rabbit was captured she descended with a calm but crimson face.

"Dear mother, don't scold the innocents any more. I know how they got here. They must have burrowed under the fence from next door."

A general sigh of relief was heard. "You may go," said Mrs. Bradish to the servants. "And pray tell me, Sylvia, how you became acquainted with the livestock of our neighbors!"

Sylvia saw too late to what she was committed, and trembled. Petan saw it also. "Madame, permit me," she said

suavely. "It was I who pointed them out to mademoiselle. She knows naught of them but that. And now let us return them. Perhaps a note of polite remonstrance might—"

Mrs. Bradish's mind was at once diverted. Sylvia, not understanding, opened her mouth to speak, but closed it again at a warning glance from Petan, wondering what the latter knew. A moment later Mrs. Bradish seated herself at her desk and took up her pen. Petan had vanished. Sylvia alone was there to soften her mother's ire. "And now," said Mrs. Bradish, "I shall express my opinion to the point."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Sylvia. "Don't give it to 'em too hot, mother. Those two old ladies didn't tell the rabbits to burrow through."

"It is inexcusable," said her mother sharply. "Those plants are ruined; they should be made to pay."

Sylvia drew a sharp breath with horror. "Oh, don't mention that!" she pleaded. "Those Japanese dwarfed trees cost a thousand francs each, and I've heard they aren't rich. Why, mother, the beauty of being rich is being able to be big and generous about such things."

Mrs. Bradish placed the tips of her jeweled fingers together and leaned back in her chair. "Now, my dear, I want to say a few words to you. Our money is our power. Power unutilized ceases to be power. It must be felt to be feared. Our neighbors despise us; therefore timid measures would be misconstrued as sycophancy. One must meet their fine contempt with arrogance. We haven't anything to be arrogant about except our money, therefore, though I'm not really vulgar in the least, I never fail to show that I have it. Wealth is respected above everything, especially by those without it; and today the rich use it as in former times people like our neighbors used their rank. Don't you suppose that Monsieur de Reizet is champing with rage because he hasn't a title to sell? If he had, he'd be running round on our Aubusson carpets like the rest of his kind."

Sylvia sighed. What was the use of

argument? Her mother would never understand. She remembered the look of quiet hostility and indifference he had thrown them as he left the Duke. She felt that both had been sincere, and she shrank from giving him further reason for them. She went to her mother, and taking that firm chin between her soft palms, said:

"Mother, you're always so good to me. Be so again, and please me by saying nothing about the cost of the plants. I'll go without a frock or two to pay for them." She kissed the tip of an ear where an effulgent pearl glowed, and watched over her mother's shoulder as the following letter was indited:

MONSIEUR:

I beg to call your attention to the unwarranted intrusion into my house of certain rabbits of prodigious appetites, which devoured my plants and caused fear and annoyance to my household. In allowing them to roam unchecked in your garden, you evinced indifference to the rights of others. I do not ask for damages, but would remind you of a gentleman's obligations as a neighbor.

Sincerely yours,

MARY PHILLIPS BRADISH.

While they were at luncheon, the footman appeared with a large gilded basket of superb flowers and the following note:

MADAME:

Your valuable and gracious note has just been received, and I hasten to present my most humble apologies, coupled with those of my brother and my aunts, for the unwarranted intrusion of members of my household into your precincts. Could the intruders speak, they, too, would express their regrets. I am desolated that anything of ours should have caused you annoyance. I deplore the havoc; I grieve for your plants. May I beg to assure you that any wounds inflicted by the animals will not be dangerous, as carrots, not human beings, are their natural food. Hereafter, should so disastrous an invasion occur again, I beg you to punish the delinquents by making them immediately into a *ragout*, for which I will gladly furnish you an excellent recipe.

With the expression of my most profound regrets and most distinguished salutations, I remain, dear madame,

Respectfully yours,

JEHAN DE REIZET.

"Veiled impertinence!" said Mrs. Bradish. "A prig if there ever was one!"

While they were having coffee, a card was handed Mrs. Bradish, bearing the name of the Duc de Petrinac. Mrs.

Bradish smiled. Petan thought: "He loses no time." Sylvia rose hurriedly and excused herself on plea of weariness.

Nearly two hours later Petan knocked at Sylvia's door. She found Sylvia in a swirl of nainsook and lace, at full length on her sofa before a fire, her long plaits of hair thrown wide. She assumed a yawn, but Petan noted that her cheeks were flushed and her eyes too brilliant to bespeak calmness of spirit. "Well," said Sylvia, "what now? I'm exhausted with sensations. Mother's just gone out in a blue rage because I won't marry the Duke."

"The Duke!"

"He disturbed our coffee to ask my hand in marriage. I suppose he thought we'd be amiably disposed after a good meal."

"Mademoiselle, you astound me!"

"Why? Because he wants me, or because I don't want him? Oh, Petan, mother did worry me. Come here and comfort me. There, sit close and hold me. Your shoulders were padded just for that. Mother says I'm an ungrateful, pig-headed girl, because I won't even try to love him. Why, one can't say to one's heart, 'Love,' as one would say to one's feet, 'Walk!' I tried to explain. She says she was in love when she married, and that there's precious little in it after two years. She talks of the Duke's diplomatic career as though that would make me happy. She rubbed in the fact that I'd go out first at dinners and help make history by being the mother of little dukes. She sighs for emblazoned carriage panels, coronets on my lingerie and the envy of her old friends in Utica."

"And what did you say, *chérie*?"

"That I wouldn't marry him if I lived and died an old maid. Then we both were rude, I'm afraid. She reminded me of all she'd done for me, which made me feel rather mean, of course, but I said that all that was for the outside of me; that the real me, deep down where only God sees, didn't care a rap for any of it, and that I'd rather have real tenderness than all the dukes in France if they were like that pallid, smooth effigy of a man!"

"Did he tell your mother he loved you?"

"Of course. She said his voice trembled with emotion; that he'd loved me since—"

"Since this morning at eleven o'clock, *ma petite*?"

Sylvia sat up among her cushions. "Why do you say that?"

Petan recounted her morning's adventure at the Bon Marché, to which Sylvia listened with varied expressions. At the end she trilled into laughter. "Oh! Oh! To think that while he wooed the Idea he was making up his mind to woo me! He didn't dare give you time to tell, Petan. He flew on the wings of a taxicab to voice his passion. Won't it be fun to tell mother?"

Then did Madame Petan give of her wisdom and discretion to her charge. She vetoed any such foolish proceeding as to tell anything, or in fact to appear otherwise than a docile daughter, who had realized the good sense of at least attempting to return the Duke's deep devotion, and that meanwhile "things" might happen. Petan's face was dark with meaning as she uttered this vague hope. She further explained that it was always wise to bend when meeting an obstacle; that to show open defiance would involve all concerned in discomfort.

Now Petan was fishing for Sylvia's confidence as to the other affair of true sentiment, which she supposed was the real reason of the girl's aversion to the nobleman, for everyone knows that when one's heart is fully occupied it resents an intruder, Sylvia, on her part, was curious to learn why Petan had lied regarding the ubiquitous rabbits. But Petan, imagining more than there was, had more curiosity to match, and it was she who fired the first gun.

"Mademoiselle, why did you tell your mother that you could not love the Duc? Because you loved another?"

"My precious Petan!" began Sylvia in an astonished voice.

"Mademoiselle, I beg—it is a sin to lie."

Sylvia sat erect and looked Petan severely in the eye. "Quite right. Why then did you lie about those rabbits? Why?"

"It is not of myself I speak, but of you. Did you think you deceived me that night in the garden?"

Sylvia frowned, then smiled. "You saw?" she asked.

"No, I saw not, it being too dark, but hear I did, a little. That he is a gentleman matters not. It was scandalous thus to speak with a stranger, an enemy, without your mother's knowledge. I have hardly slept, so distraught have I been, waiting for your confidence and fearful for your safety with your mother."

Sylvia, ignorant of Petan's mistaken idea of the identity of her swain, wondered at her seriousness over a lark with a charming boy. Petan, on the other hand, was thunderstruck at the brazen self-possession of the guilty one. "Come, tell me, *chérie*, tell me all," she said. "Have no fear. I, too, was once young."

Sylvia gazed meditatively at the ceiling. "It's very simple," she said slowly. "You see, he loves me."

"*Mon Dieu!*" ejaculated the duenna, less astonished than she appeared to be.

"Yes. And so charmingly does he express it that it savors of—of—toffy!"

"When and where did this disgraceful affair commence?"

"He saw me riding in the Bois, and the dear used to wait to see me go by. He sent me the most delightful note requesting an interview, and—well, you know mother, and so do I. An affair of sentiment with our neighbors isn't on her program, so I just lay low—and went, as you know—oh, perfidious Petan! That drawer is full of his adorable letters."

Petan was petrified at this audacity, but managed to ask: "And you find him attractive?"

"Utterly. He speaks perfect English, and kisses my hand through the grille like a fairy prince. Now don't look like that, you blessed old duck!"

Sylvia had seen Petan's face suddenly change from mere curiosity to dignified severity, as the latter realized that it was high time to attend to duty. Delight in this romance and eagerness to learn more entrancing details had obliterated for a moment her conscience. She now drew

herself up with a round turn and frowned in a proper manner.

"Mademoiselle, I am shocked, horrified at this revelation. Oh, never could I have believed you capable of such behavior, were your lips not revealing the hideous truth." Her black silk creaked with propriety.

Sylvia, with an adorable movement, threw herself into Petan's arms. "Oh, Petan, don't scold! Don't tell. I've been so bored and lonely among these worthless men. It's so sweet to have one clean and loving heart. And he has the darlinest curls. I've patted them through the grille, and—"

This was too much even for a sentimental dragon. "Curls? You patted his curls? May the saints preserve us! Am I mad, or do my ears deceive me? Then must he have curled them on tongs, for when I saw him his hair lay as sleek as paper on the wall. He must indeed be enamored thus to make such a toilette for darkness. This I cannot countenance. Truly, I swear to tell your mother all, if you do not promise to pat his curls no more."

Genuine tears stood in her eyes, for she was torn between duty and romance. Besides, be it said to her credit, she honestly believed that this adventure could result not in harm but a possible joy for her adored one. She knew how truly De Reizet deserved affection and respect. If Mrs. Bradish desired an aristocratic marriage for her daughter, there was none better, though no tittle shed a luster. She decided to temporize. No mischief had been done of a serious nature, and she should see that none was done in the future.

If Mrs. Bradish discovered the state of things, she, Petan, would be thrown into the outer darkness minus a character. Yet the danger must be faced. With Sylvia refusing to give up her adorer, Petan must throw herself into the breach, or, by informing Mrs. Bradish end the happy romance forever.

She and Sylvia discussed the pros and cons, and Petan, once committed, warmed to the work. Sylvia read her some of the letters. Pure affection breathed from every line, and the dragon

was entranced to find at last a perfect romance between two perfect beings. Before she departed, however, she advised a conflagration of these burning but, unknown to her, badly spelled epistles. Together they saw them turn to ashes, but the tears of regret were in Madame Petan's eyes, not Sylvia's, at which the latter wondered.

V

THE French have small comprehension of the continual give and take of the careless and often extravagant American hospitality. The Duke was conservative, and when he decided to invite Mrs. Bradish and her daughter to dine, it proved how far they had penetrated within the citadel of his social environment. It also marked progress on the road of his aspirations.

The Duke's house was famous for its historical interest and beauty. Its high ceilings were carved and painted with exquisite art. The rooms surrounded a second court on which long windows opened, where a fountain played on marble dryads and a tiny lawn smiled in peace.

On the eventful evening of the dinner the Duke awaited his guests alone, standing before the fireplace beneath the high, carved chimney. The red button of the Legion of Honor illuminated his buttonhole. He glanced about the splendid rooms with pride. All was in readiness, but he decided to have one more look at the table.

A few flowers were meagerly disposed among heavy crystal and silver filled with nuts, raisins and bonbons. He was about to turn away when he leaned over the table and examined the bonbon dishes with sudden scrutiny. With a smothered ejaculation, he touched the bell.

"Bring Mademoiselle Margot here at once," he said to the servant.

He stood before the fire and waited. Presently a door at the further end of the room opened. In the aperture appeared a little girl about four years old, in her nightdress, wrapped in a shawl,

her bare feet showing beneath its fringe. In her arms was clasped the Idea clothed in an old silk waist. The Duke looked at the ormolu clock and saw it still lacked ten minutes to the dinner hour.

The child stood alone at the end of the vast room, her charming little face as grave as his own. She did not advance, but stood with dignity while they regarded one another in silence.

"Come here," said the Duke.

She did not move, though no sign of fear showed in her face, rather an alert curiosity. "Obey me, Margot," he said.

The child advanced slowly down the room, dragging the Idea by one hand. At last she stood before him, looking up into his stern face. Eye searched eye in tense silence. "You disobeyed me," said the Duke.

"No."

"I forbade you to eat the bonbons."

"I ate them not."

"Margot!"

"Not one did I eat."

"I saw the marks of your fingers, and the bonbons were disturbed."

"I ate them not. No, not one. I only licked them all. Nothing but my tongue touched them, not a tooth. *Voyez!*"

The pink tongue was thrust out to its utmost length, still discolored by chocolate. The Duke stared, bent and looked into the wide brown eyes, and then, with a shout of laughter, gathered her into his arms, while the Idea remained forgotten on the floor. "Thou clever one! Ever dost thou get the better of me, thou cherub!"

Margot nestled against his cheek, relieved but not at all disconcerted. The hands of the clock had passed the dinner hour, but both had forgotten time. The man's face was transformed, while they talked nonsense to each other. Just then the wide doors at the other end of the room were flung open by two flunkies, and a stout lady in an old-fashioned brocade swept toward them. With the child on his arm, the Duke went forward to greet her.

"Princess, welcome!" He kissed her hand and handed the child over to a servant. Then the door closed, as through the opposite one other great ladies ar-

rived in somewhat shabby clothes and splendid jewels. Some were young and exquisitely dressed and their hair marvels of the *coiffeur's* art. The room resounded with airy conversation and laughter. The men, many bearing names familiar in history, appeared commonplace and badly tailored. They spoke with animation, leaning in attitudes of devotion above the women. At last the groom announced: "Madame Bradish, Mademoiselle Bradish." The two ladies advanced with leisurely composure, while curious eyes watched. All knew what this advent into their circle portended. These were the famous Americans whose wealth might regild the tarnished cornices above them.

Both mother and daughter were admirably gowned. Sylvia's slender throat and spirited head bore no jewels, and her clinging white satin gown was of evident costliness despite its apparent simplicity. Her mother's necklace, three yards long, of perfectly matched pearls, seemed to speak of wealth restrained by good taste. Mrs. Bradish was not in the least embarrassed. After fifteen years of social conflict she had become an armored cruiser, invincible at all points. Her host bent and kissed her white glove and murmured his pleasure to Sylvia. Those near them were introduced, and all the men at once, as is the French custom, came forward also to be presented.

Then three more guests were announced. To Mrs. Bradish's wrath and surprise, Monsieur de Reizet and his aunts entered. The two old ladies advanced side by side, their ebony staffs tapping in unison. They made a charming picture in their wide-skirted gray satins gathered at the waist, their white heads erect beneath white lace. Lace scarfs covered their bared shoulders, and on each breast lay a large cross of yellowed pearls.

The younger women went to them, curtesying with respectful affection, while De Reizet, standing by, encountered Sylvia's glance. His worldly training stood him in good stead, but Sylvia detected the quickly hidden surprise and annoyance. It was plain that he had not known they were coming, that the

dinner was really given for them. Did he think they had known he was to be there? She felt a childish impulse to cross the room and tell him that the surprise and annoyance were mutual. But, after all, the house was not his, and she and her mother had as much right there as he had. She saw the Duke say something to him in a low voice, and then, as De Reizet hesitated, the other laid a hand on his arm and led him across the room. He was presented to her mother and then to her. It was then that Mrs. Bradish's social genius made itself evident. She looked up at him with a charming smile and spoke naturally and sweetly. "As you are strong, be merciful," she said.

De Reizet bowed. "Madame, all I have is at your disposal." Then, realizing the possible construction she might put upon his words, he flushed, his even white teeth gleaming in an irrepressible smile. He glanced at Sylvia, caught her answering smile, and his own vanished. Did the girl, he thought, fancy that charm added to money could so quickly change his determination regarding his land? He murmured a few commonplaces and turned away as dinner was announced.

Mrs. Bradish, being untitled, sat far from her host, shuddering at the unshaded light from above, which discovered every rouged cheek and line in the faces about the table. The table also gave her a shock, accustomed as she was to mounds of orchids and shaded candles. It looked, she thought, like a table on exhibition in a royal palace. Sylvia would change all that, especially the presence of a crystal knife-rest at each place, as though the knives and forks might give out.

Sylvia looked about her, frankly charmed and interested. The atmosphere of the room was a new experience. Stateliness and elegant ceremony were oddly mingled with an air of intimate understanding as among old friends. One felt that these people were not only profoundly acquainted with one another, but that for generations close relationships had existed in tastes, habits of life and thought, religion and sentiment. In

the American colony, on the contrary, there forever lay a pall of mutual distrust. Each was prone to wonder who and what the other was. Each was ignorant of the others' antecedents, their past domestic relations, beliefs and subtleties, and given to wonder whether the latest scandal about his neighbor might not indeed be true. There seemed to be among them no standard save money and willingness to feed one's neighbor. She had heard unattached men boast that they paid for no meal but their *petit déjeuner*. Morality weighed little in the balance against the art of pretense. If the sinner could entertain, she was treated with what they called "tolerance." If not, she was justly stamped upon and forgotten.

But here there was nothing to ask, because everything was known, sins as well as virtues, and therefore they were able to turn their attention to other matters. Many called each other by their Christian names. The old Princess threw the Duke a rose, which he placed in his buttonhole with an air of devotion.

De Reizet sat opposite Sylvia, beside a pretty woman with whom he appeared to be on the gayest terms. His face was directly in Sylvia's line of vision, and each continually caught the other's eye with assumed, bland indifference. Sylvia, though she found her neighbors somewhat dull, exerted all the powers of witchery to charm them. De Reizet was always aware of that small head with its airy distinction, and her mobile, charming face with its fresh lips and laughing eyes. He was curious to know what she was discussing with such animation, and tried in vain to hear, while instinctively appearing to be absorbed only in his partner.

What a pity, he thought, that so delightful an exterior covered a calculating mind! These American girls, devoid of temperament, trained for the market, with their superficial cultivation and sordid ideals, were a pest in Europe. They judged all Frenchmen by their experience with money hunters. Doubtless she fancied that he also longed to get his fingers into their money bags.

It was insufferable for Paul to have thus brought them together after the mother's rudeness. At this point in his scornful reflections, Sylvia's glance, filled with laughter at her neighbor's joke, met his. Her merriment was so natural and girlish that involuntarily he smiled straight into her eyes. She smiled back; then both, with exaggerated attention and sobriety, turned their attention elsewhere.

Mrs. Bradish meanwhile was utilizing her opportunity, which in this case was personified by a delightful old vicomte who found her charming and lost no time in telling her so. He failed to hear all she said, but his bright little eyes appreciated her smart attire and snowy shoulders. The wide black ribbon which held his glasses caught in a button of his gay waistcoat, and he thrilled as her pretty hands, loaded with jewels, detached it. He assured her that those hands were the reincarnation of lilies, and managed to squeeze one when recovering her napkin from the floor. He found her deliciously ignorant—this inventor of the great Idea—and imparted much valuable information.

"*Voyez, madame.* Flirt not with a Frenchman unless you have more to offer than platonism. Platonism is an insult to a man and makes of him an enemy. Also forego the idea you have just expressed that youth has the prerogative of love. Not so. It is the full blown rose which attracts and gives of its sweetness. I have lived seventy years in this city, and know whereof I speak. Rubens never painted a woman under thirty." The Vicomte chuckled and sipped his sweet champagne daintily that the dye might not come off his mustache.

"You have, I hear, some excellent examples of Rubens," said Mrs. Bradish, who had heard nothing of the kind but wished to see his famous chateau.

"Not one, madame. All sold to pay for a new roof. But I have a collection of turtles which would amaze you. You must come and see them. All named after famous beauties. Madame de Pompadour has but three legs. The Comtesse de Montespan bit off the

fourth in a quarrel over a cabbage leaf. Naughty little dears!"

"Turtles have such charm," murmured his listener. "Where do you keep them—in a cage?"

"I, madame—a cage? *Quel horreur!* You must know that it was I who founded in Paris the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. No, madame, they live in my house like ladies, where they will. They care not for travel, and the chateau suffices. The big one has a porcelain bath, but the others wander."

"You mean to tell me they walk about the house?"

"Certainly. Why not? If you chance to sit on one in a chair, despair not, for its shell protects it."

"And if I found one in my bed?"

"Get out again, and with tenderness—for they are of a sensitive nature—place it in a shoe or a hat till morning."

The Duke caught Mrs. Bradish's eye and laughed, leaning across the corner of the table. He was pleased at the old Vicomte's interest in his guest, for the old beau, despite his eccentricities, had social influence and invariably gossiped like a hen.

The host stood aside as they passed into the *salon* after dinner, and found himself beside Mrs. Bradish. Suddenly his blood froze in his veins. De Reizet had espied the Idea, forgotten in the shadow of the caryatids which supported the great chimney, and held it up before the company. Its décolleté bodice showed the flabby dummy and its familiar linings to the assemblage, Mrs. Bradish and Sylvia included. For a moment the Duke's self-possession was in danger. He dared not look at the inventor, and wondered what her feelings and suppositions might be.

"What is it, Paul?" asked De Reizet, laughing. "A new kind of doll? Where is its head?"

Mrs. Bradish showed her mettle. She took the battered effigy. "Your little girl has been playing the French Revolution," she said, smiling, though her cheeks were crimson beneath their rouge. She turned to the Duke and looked him

straight in the eye. "Or perhaps you may be able to give a more satisfactory explanation. Do you have your coats fitted on it?"

But the Duke was himself again, and returned her smile suavely. "It belongs to my housekeeper," he lied pleasantly—"a precious possession. You should have one, madame. They say it is an American invention. One blows it up with air to fit any lining. Jack, alas, used it as a football in the garden, which explains its shabby appearance." He touched the bell and gravely handed the Idea to the footman. Cigarettes were lit, the women also smoking, and the party broke into groups. Under the Duke's adroit manipulation, Sylvia found herself seated between De Reizet's aunts. The Duke had decided that it was a necessary part of his campaign to end at least outwardly the foolish breach between these neighbors. He called to De Reizet to bring Sylvia a more comfortable chair, and then detained him also in the group.

The twins studied the American girl with interest, listened to her elegant French with astonishment, and noted her composure and pretty manner. As for Sylvia, she longed to kiss those rose-tinted cheeks and to tell them how adorable she found them.

As the company broke up Sylvia stood at the top of the stairs, and De Reizet found himself beside her. The others below blocked the way while Mrs. Bradish made an engagement for dinner with the delighted Duke. Sylvia, glancing at De Reizet, surprised a satirical smile as he watched them. She drew herself upright, so that her head was on a level with his shoulder. He turned to her and said formally: "I trust you have enjoyed your first visit to an old-fashioned French house."

"It has been charming," Sylvia replied. She smiled up at him demurely. He noticed the limpidity of her eyes beneath their level brows. He suddenly felt sorry for her. She seemed alien to her surroundings. Perhaps, after all, she might have a heart tucked away beneath that expensive bodice. Perhaps she had a capacity for tenderness and an

intelligence for which he had not given her credit.

She put out her hand to him. "Good night," she said. "We shall undoubtedly meet often, here or elsewhere, and I trust you will make me feel at home in this charming society."

The Duke detained his cousin for a business talk. They went into the library on the lower floor. A fire gleamed on the hearth, and the two men drew their chairs to the blaze.

"You think the dinner passed off well?" asked the host. "Don't you think the Americans made a favorable impression?"

Jehan nodded. "My aunts found Mademoiselle Bradish delightful," he said.

The older man stretched his legs and smiled. "And so did I. She is worthy to grace any position."

Both men gazed into the fire in silence. "How are the negotiations for the army tissue coming on?" asked Petrinac finally.

"Slowly. Have you studied the patent?" asked De Reizet.

"Only superficially. Would you be so kind as to explain? Technicalities are beyond me."

"With pleasure. Have you some string?"

Paul rose and secured a ball of thin twine, which he gave to his cousin, who with his penknife cut a number of pieces of equal length. "Now imagine," Jehan said, arranging them on the table between them, that these are strands of the most filmy fiber possible. You know that when you try to cut across a lock of hair the scissors fail to cut, unless to separate the hairs. Well, that is the groundwork of his idea—the finer the fiber, the harder to cut or tear *en masse*. It will blunt the sharpest razor."

Petrinac leaned forward, a flush on his cheek, following through narrowed lids each point of the explanation.

"Well," continued De Reizet, "it seems absurdly simple. He takes a mass of these filmy threads and places them so that each layer is crossed by another. Each layer is almost untearable across, especially when soaked in the solution

which holds them together and submitted to pressure. Several layers, one on the other, their fibers lying transversely and subjected to pressure and intense heat, make a fabric perfectly watertight, untearable and of any thickness desired."

The other's eyes sparkled. "What a tissue for tents, coats and blankets in place of the heavy stuff now used! Have you a sample?"

De Reizet opened a wallet and produced a dozen bits of what appeared to be pieces of brown paper, white kid and heavy leather. Petrinac took them between his fingers, pulling, smelling and holding them to the light. One bit he endeavored to tear, but it successfully resisted his sinewy fingers. He laid them on the table in a row.

"The inventor certainly trusts you, Jehan, to leave them in your possession, for a clever chemist might—"

"I never leave them nor they me," said De Reizet. "The man's whole life and my honor lie in those little bits."

The Duke leaned back in his chair, putting up one hand between his face and the blaze, and then restlessly reached to the center table and took a newspaper and held that before him. "It depends, of course, on the cost of production," he said.

De Reizet held up a piece. "He claims that this quality costs less than fifty centimes per square metre to produce," he explained. "You see it is only stamped, not coated like the imitation leather."

Petrinac leaned forward. His paper fell upon the table, and in an instant the samples were scattered broadcast over the floor. He uttered an exclamation of impatience and bent quickly to reclaim them. De Reizet did the same. The little table was pushed back, while both men on hands and knees gathered up the scattered pieces. "I think we have them all," said the Duke, standing up. He was breathing quickly. "Look—aren't they all right?"

De Reizet took them and laid them on the table with his own. "Yes—no; the brown uncoated one is missing."

"Are you sure?" asked the other. "Let us look again."

They both searched again, this time

earnestly, for it evaded their eyes. De Reizet was annoyed, for, while not of vital importance, still they had been intrusted to his keeping, and the inventor's suspicions would be augmented. They searched the floor, the chairs, peered into every corner and crevice, but in vain. At last the Duke rose, rubbing the dust from his knees.

"It isn't there, Jehan. It must have fallen into the fire. I'm sorry, but you can explain. If necessary, I will corroborate you."

"It's awkward," said De Reizet irritably, as he, too, worried and annoyed, rose from a further corner and blew out his match. "It places me in an awkward position. However, you must look again by daylight and direct the servants not to sweep here till you have searched thoroughly. You'll probably find it, and you can send it to me at the War Office."

The Duke touched the bell and ordered the servant to touch nothing in the room till noon the next day, then ordered his hat and coat to be brought and a cab to be summoned.

"Going out again?" asked De Reizet.

"Yes—thought I'd look in at the American embassy. Madame Bradish and her daughter went on there to a musicale. I'll drop you or take you there, just as you like. But excuse me a moment. I'll just run up and see if Margot is asleep."

De Reizet, left alone, leaned against the chimney piece, considering how certain it was that he would not go on to the American embassy where that frivolous young neighbor of his would be. Still, they would have good music; it was educating to meet other nationalities; there would be more French than Americans there, anyway.

In this spirit did Monsieur de Reizet at last accompany his ducal cousin. French acquaintances greeted him as he followed Paul into the *salon*, where the wife of the American ambassador welcomed them with cordiality. The music was over, and the great ballroom was being cleared of its chairs for dancing. Diplomats, women of fashion and men distinguished in many ways stood or

strolled about gaily and with an air of intimacy.

De Reizet saw many he knew, among them Mrs. Francis-Bray. They were old friends, and she was surprised to receive from him only a smile. He appeared to be looking for someone. She saw him peer through the throng to where in the doorway the Duc de Petrinac stood, bending devotedly toward Miss Bradish. The girl, with a perfunctory smile, played with her fan while her gaze wandered. De Reizet deliberately placed himself in her line of vision, bowed and moved as though to pass by them through the door, but Paul touched his arm.

"Supper is at one," he said pleasantly. "Come to our table—mademoiselle, her mother and two or three others."

Someone spoke to him, and De Reizet found himself alone with Sylvia. The orchestra started a waltz, and common politeness compelled him to ask her for a dance. In a moment they were floating about the room together. Sylvia felt his strong arm about her. The touch of his coat sleeve on her bare arm lent an odd sense of intimacy. As they circled the room, De Reizet saw Mrs. Bradish staring at them through her lorgnettes, amazement and wrath depicted on her countenance. A sudden feeling of defiance filled him. Why shouldn't he dance with Miss Bradish if he saw fit? If there was condescension in the affair anywhere, it lay with him. Madame Bradish should have a lesson.

Not till the last note died did they stop, and when they did, Jehan made it convenient to pause before a royal personage for whom this brilliant function had been given—a young man, a tennis enthusiast and a friend of De Reizet's. They had been at college together, yachted and shot together; and it was with conspicuous pleasure that they greeted each other now. His Highness asked that De Reizet's charming partner should be presented, and Mrs. Bradish had the edification of seeing it done. All three chatted for a few moments; then His Highness bowed himself away. Whereupon De Reizet said, with a significant glance toward Mrs. Bradish: "Let us fly!"

Sylvia laughed. "Have you a monoplaner in your pocket?"

Their former hostility in some subtle way seemed banished. De Reizet found two chairs behind palms near the staircase. "Now," said he, "can't you make believe this is America, and that I am one of those perfect products of your civilization, a man who understands how to be a friend?"

Sylvia glanced at the strong face bending toward her, with the honest eyes lit by raillery. "You ask me to make believe. I don't care for making believe. That sort of thing is purely French. I like real things, real feeling, being in earnest about everything, even pleasure."

De Reizet regarded her contemplatively. "Yes, I knew you were like that, and so am I. That is why I don't care very much for this sort of thing." He waved his hand toward the gay throng. "What is called society obliterates personality. One is forced to adapt oneself to so many that one loses one's own individuality."

"And you wish to remain yourself?" asked Sylvia.

"Yes, mademoiselle, for am I not answerable for the development of my best capacities? One's individuality is a dignified and important factor and not to be treated lightly."

"But a woman rarely knows what her real self is. With one person she is one creature; with another she contradicts everything she may have felt, thought or said, and be sincere in all. I have known those who made me a serious and thoughtful woman, weighed down by the sense of the tragedy of life. And then—"

Sylvia paused. Her expression changed from gravity to a kind of wistful amusement.

"And then?" said De Reizet.

"Well, there are others who provoke a certain perversity. Their sense of their importance raises opposition in me. The world is so full of beauty, there is so much kindness that one can't help but be glad and gay to be part of it all. Life seems to hold out its hands full of lovely things, and its sighs are forgotten."

De Reizet leaned forward. "And

when do you feel the sighs—among the poor?"

Sylvia shook her head, smiling at him. "No—as I said, I'm perverse. It is the contrast which opens my ears to the sighs. For instance, the other night, Sunday night, when we came out from the Ritz where we'd been dining. The room had been filled with the rich. Such jewels! Such gowns! Millions were represented in that crowd of prosperous persons who ate delicate food, sipped costly wines and preened their smart selves for the envy of one another. Everything seemed to be there but love—I mean love of humanity. When we came out it was raining. By the door stood an old woman. She must have been soaked to the skin. She was hideous, degraded, but old, and she was crying. Think of it—to be old, and unhappy enough to cry! Doesn't that counterbalance the degradation? Well, I made her tell me why she was there. She had pins for sale but had sold none, and if she went home her son-in-law would beat her. So I made everyone give. Our chauffeur passed his hat around, and we bundled her into a cab, the happiest old wreck you ever saw. Her story was true, for I went the next day to find out. Now perhaps if I hadn't been in that gay, luxurious Ritz I wouldn't have felt so sympathetic."

"Had you been gay in the Ritz, mademoiselle?"

"In a way, yes. I love pretty things—smart people and light and music. You see how frivolous I am. But all the time my real self seems to be sitting critically in the corner of my brain, a little bored and, to tell the truth, feeling neglected. Really sometimes its feelings get quite hurt, but I pretend not to notice and laugh and chatter and try to be amusing. Only, when I get alone, I say to it: 'Now what's the matter? Tell me all about it.'"

"And what does that real self say is the matter?"

Sylvia shook her head. "Oh, one mustn't betray confidences!"

De Reizet sighed aggressively. "Confidences might be shared with a friend. Now if I might be introduced to that

real self, who knows—it might like my looks. It might say: 'There is a chap who isn't so bad; he at least wants to be decent.' And then—"

Sylvia regarded him gravely; then she smiled. "You've forgotten all about—mother!"

"Gracious—so I have!"

"And the rabbits."

"Alas! Do tell me, why does she so desire my poor spot of land?"

"To give parties on—under red umbrellas."

"Suppose I lend it to her occasionally?"

Sylvia rose. "There's the fence. That would irritate her. Mother's ambitions won't be bounded by any fence, you know."

De Reizet blocked her exit. "But between you and me, mademoiselle, can't we ignore the fence? Can't we pull it down?"

Sylvia tilted her head on one side and gazed abstractedly over his shoulder. "We might burrow under," she said.

VI

It was a moment pregnant with satisfaction to Mrs. Bradish when she piloted Sylvia into Mrs. Francis-Bray's house. Leaving the little hall piled high with costly furs and coats, they passed a room on the left, heavy with silence and the cigarette smoke of bridgers, to the larger *salon* beyond whence issued voices.

Mrs. Francis-Bray stood receiving by the door, slender and gowned to perfection, her long throat, which gave her such distinction, surrounded by a dog collar of brilliants. She greeted them with simple kindness and passed them on as others entered.

Mrs. Bradish stood still a moment, that everyone might see that she had "arrived." She wore a dark tailor suit, and Sylvia was gowned with similar discretion, as though they had merely run in on impulse in a friendly way. In a corner sat three women, one white-haired. Their eyes looked as though they had been sharpened by years of intimacy

with their tongues. They stared after the retreating figures of mother and daughter.

"I knew she'd get here," said one.

"I wonder where she came from, anyway?" said the second. "Some mystery; and where there's a mystery there is something queer."

"Husband dead?" queried the third.

"Who knows? She says he is. But I don't know anyone who saw him buried."

"She knows how to give good dinners. The last one I went to was really quite decent, and she had the German ambassador, if you please. Odd how foreigners swallow some of these queer Americans! I only go there because everyone else goes; and one hates to appear snobbish you know."

The white-haired one leaned forward confidentially. "They dined with the Duc de Petrinac last week at that famous house of his in the Faubourg St. Honoré. He is mad about the girl, and her mother is wild for the match. Of course he's attractive in a certain way, but everyone knows he can be more detestable in a polite way than any man in France. He simply killed his first wife, though they say he kissed her hand charmingly even in her coffin. Isn't it disgusting? But it's a sure go. That Mrs. Bradish is the cleverest manager in the American colony."

"How perfectly horrible! What a wicked woman to sacrifice that girl! Well, dears, I want my tea. See you later."

She rose and moved away. Her two friendly enemies saw her maneuver toward the probable mother-in-law of a duke. When out of earshot one remarked: "Watch her steer for the 'wicked woman'! She never misses an opportunity."

"Who was she? Do you know?"

"She claims to be a Knickerbocker, but I heard she used to work in a department store in New York."

"Really? Fancy that! One can't be too careful. Of course I go out a little to pass the time, but I'm not really one of the colony."

"Nor I," said the other mechanically,

as though from long established habit. "It's so gossipy."

Mrs. Bradish found herself with Sylvia standing beside a table covered with plain damask and flowers and a multiplicity of edibles. At either end young women in elaborate gowns and large hats dispensed tea and chocolate. Small groups of people stood about, and a row of women lined the wall, balancing fragile cups with acrobatic skill. A couple of elderly men with remarkable agility passed cakes and scones. Most of these faces bore an air of fatigue, the result of ceaseless effort to appear interested when profoundly bored.

Their daily routine was similar to that of Mrs. Bradish, though some, living in apartments too small for entertaining, were invited only to "teas," a form of entertainment which they all decried but attended with great regularity. There was little real intimacy among them save that of cards and food. With few exceptions, they were women of blameless lives, and some belonged to the best society America produces; they resided in Paris for reasons of economy, desire to forget matrimonial disaster or for love of that ease and irresponsibility unknown in America's hectic cities.

But a curious condition resulted. Individuals from widely different places and conditions, being ignorant of one another, took it for granted that the unknown must be objectionable; and many sought to establish themselves by doubting the credentials of others. While meeting continually, few dared to share affection or confidence.

To a woman like Mrs. Francis-Bray, who condoned weaknesses she did not share, this phase had become too familiar to criticize. She had her own friends, as charming as herself, who, from kindness and absence of priggishness, allowed their circle to be invaded by lesser lights of the social firmament as long as those lights shed a clean and proper luster. Also the cheque books of these aspirants were useful for their charities, and therefore one met sometimes before this shrine of buttered scones and social excellence individuals who must have been surprised to find themselves there.

Meanwhile Sylvia, hoping for a word with her hostess, was delighted at last to see her beckon. They found a small sofa in a corner, and Mrs. Francis-Bray laid one fine hand on Sylvia's with a gesture of intimacy.

"Excuse an old woman's frankness," she said, "but what is a lovely young creature like you doing over here among us grayheads, instead of playing with those nice young college boys at home?"

Sylvia was at a loss for a moment. Why, indeed, was she there? She considered. "I'll tell you," she said simply. "We're here because it would be dull for mother in Utica. This life has spoiled her for church sociables." The girl laughed without bitterness. "Later, when we go back, if we ever do, we'll be in society there because we're in it here. It's like getting in through a side entrance, you see."

Mrs. Francis-Bray was highly amused by this frankness, and liked the girl's honest disregard of pretense. "I hear you are getting to know some of the good French society," she said. "A rare thing for an Anglo-Saxon. Indeed a little bird has just whispered of a duke—"

Sylvia flushed with annoyance, but spoke with restraint. "Oh, mother likes to sample the best while she is about it. And I find these people very kind."

"They have opinions, however," said Mrs. Francis-Bray, "and also prejudices, but a French woman would no sooner reveal one to the light of day than leave her nose unpowdered. She conceals everything, even her heart."

"Has she one?"

"I fancy only for her children. For others she has only emotions, and she plays with those like a child with bubbles. They end in air and no one is the worse. But you, dear child, you'll marry a Frenchman, I suppose, and be—a duchess."

Sylvia laughed. "It wouldn't do, as I'm so old-fashioned as to find emotions inadequate. I wouldn't mind being an old maid if I could be like two doves of old maids I met the other night." She told of the dinner, and incidentally of her mother's quarrel with Jehan de Reizet.

"I know De Reizet well," said her listener. "He used to come here often. He is one of the few Frenchmen I know without vices. And I can tell you why it is he has refused to sell. It isn't obstinacy. It is simply a sentiment, and a charming one. It is because his old aunts cling to their home and it would break their hearts to leave it. Personally he would be glad to get rid of the old place, which eats up an absurd amount in taxes and repairs. He is not rich, and what he could get for it would relieve him of many anxieties. He is the most unselfish of men, and denies himself everything to educate his little brother and give those two sweet old souls their luxuries. Why don't you tell your mother this and end the foolish quarrel?"

Sylvia was silent. She could not explain that to the inventor of the Idea sentiment was considered as incongruous as a rose in a glass of beer. Her mother would only think him a fool instead of a knave. Sylvia flushed hotly at the memory of what he had borne from them. He must have thought her mother and herself indeed different from himself to have refrained from imparting a reason which would have been respected by fine souls. The thought sickened her, and for a moment she hated him.

She remembered the shabby barouche in which the old ladies took the air behind tiny sunshades which bent on their sticks. She remembered that De Reizet's evening dress had not been of the very latest cut. Yet Jack was always smartly turned out and rode his pony in the Bois. She had never seen De Reizet ride—doubtless because a horse was lacking.

Others joined them, and the girl rose. Mrs. Francis-Bray wondered at her grave face. Mrs. Bradish appeared, radiant but well in hand, and both made their adieus. Descending the stairs, they met De Reizet. She was surprised, and wondered why he had taken this plunge into the American colony. He stood aside as they passed, bowing ceremoniously.

Sylvia had a rendezvous with Jack at six, but her mother considered that it

needed two heads to select some silk petticoats in a certain shop on the other side of the Seine, and the girl was forced to obey in silence.

As they whirled down the Champs Elysées, her mother called her attention to strange pools of water on the right, where grass should have been. They lay motionless and sinister, reflecting the bare trees in their shallow depths, troubled only by moisture dripping from above. It had been raining most of the day, and above those pools and somber trees the sky held vast clouds, piled high. Parisians had begun to realize that those past months of rain might mean something more than vague paragraphs in their morning papers telling of flooded districts outside the city, where the houses of the poor along the banks of the Seine at Asnières and Puteaux had been forsaken, and even the railroad trains ran over submerged tracks.

As the motor crossed the Pont Alexandre, the Seine rolled below them swollen and ominously quiet. No traffic disturbed its sullen flow. That usually teeming thoroughfare was as forsaken as though it swept through a desert. No boat could now pass beneath the bridges, where the water had mounted to within a few feet of the keystone. The tops of trees swayed above the submerged *quais*. Over the parapet on either side a silent throng leaned, watching that resistless flood creep ever upward. Where was it to stop? Once over that frail barrier, Paris lay at its mercy.

The motor turned off the Rue du Bac into a side street, and in a moment they found their way barred by a gendarme, who guarded a barricade of bags filled with sand built across from house to house. Beyond them a few yards of cobbles were visible, and over these came creeping little streams of water from what appeared to be a canal beyond. Sylvia looked at it in astonishment, realizing for the first time the menace of what it represented. Down the center of this canal, the day before a crowded thoroughfare, boats were gliding piled with furniture and escaping inhabitants. Passing glimpses of other side streets revealed other canals, traversed by frail

bridges of planks supported by barrels or boxes. From the windows on either side anxious faces appeared, and through one aperture on the second floor people were descending by a ladder to a boat below.

They reached a place where the street was choked by traffic, and were obliged to halt for a moment in front of a shabby café. Before its dingy windows were two iron tables beneath a frayed and flapping awning. Sylvia's idle eyes wandered to the interior, and descried two figures before a deal table, on which stood a bottle and two tall glasses.

As her eyes became accustomed to the gloom within, her attention was arrested by a familiar profile, that of the Duc de Petrinac. It was unmistakable. She thought it odd that he should be in such a place, but her surprise was forgotten in contemplation of his companion. He resembled the familiar portraits of a famous detective, but his body appeared small and distorted.

The two men were absorbed. Some papers lay between them, which the Duke was apparently explaining. Neither of the men saw the motor outside, and Sylvia said nothing to her mother.

It was after six when they had finally finished their shopping and reached the Rond Point. Sylvia reached for the speaking tube. "Mother," she said, "please let me out here. I need exercise and want to walk the rest of the way."

Left to herself, Sylvia stood on the sidewalk near the Petit Palais. Was she too late? The avenue was a dizzying torrent of moving vehicles. At its end the Arc de Triomphe loomed against a stormy sky, pierced by pale shafts of watery sunlight. Pedestrians were few. Sodden leaves lay on the wet asphalt, and the iron chairs were piled into pyramids among the dank trees. She looked about and sighed with relief. He was there, tossing gravel into one of those sinister pools, which already seemed deeper than an hour before.

He turned, saw her, ran forward and kissed her gloved fingers.

"I was afraid you weren't coming, and thought of drowning myself in that pool."

They walked along together. Sylvia

told him where she had been, and of her meetings with his brother.

"Jehan said something funny about you," confided Jack.

"Funny—about me?"

"Yes. He said he was surprised; that you were different from what he expected."

"The question is, what did he expect?"

"Well, you see, as he doesn't know I ever saw you, he says what he thinks to our aunts. He said that you have pretty hair."

"Oh!"

"And intelligent eyes; and that you have a way with you."

"More than one, if he but knew," smiled Sylvia. "And what did your aunts say?"

"They found you adorable, but you rather alarmed them, as though you might blow up any moment like a lovely piece of fireworks. They said it was a pity you couldn't come for *gouter* some day. They are dears, my aunts. They just long to pet anything young or lonesome."

"But I'm not lonesome."

"Jehan said you were. He said you had it in your eyes, and that he'd like to send you back to America where you belong."

"That sounds hospitable!"

"I told him the best way was for him to marry you himself."

Sylvia whirled on the boy. "You didn't! You—"

"Well, rather. But don't be frightened. He said nothing under heaven would induce him to."

"Oh, he did, did he? Your brother is a detestable, stupid—er—"

"Precisely. And I told him so. But Sylvia, he isn't, really. He didn't mean it, because when Aunt Cecile agreed with him he got quite angry and declared no one understood you but him, and that you deserved sympathy, not blame. Poor Aunt Cecile looked quite bewildered and Aunt Agathe said he wasn't well and needed a *tisane*. I believe she's right, for lately he has been queer. Sometimes he comes home awfully gay and sometimes in the dumps."

"That's when he's run up against me," said Sylvia. "He needs educating."

VII

AUNT CECILE and Aunt Agathe lay high on their pillows in the great bed under its emblazoned and faded canopy, their heads in frilled nightcaps.

Cecile spoke. "Sister, do you believe it? Perhaps Tontine was mistaken."

"She said she heard their voices plainly. They seemed to come from the windows high up over the area dividing our house from that of Madame Bradish."

"But I cannot bear to think that our good Philippe, young though he be, could be so wicked as to hold converse with a maidservant at night."

"But something must be done. Harm may come to the girl. We must act."

"But how?"

"We want proof. We must get it. We must not chance to Tontine's imagination in such a matter. I feel that we must put it to the test by seeing or hearing for ourselves."

"You mean go up on the roof as did Tontine? *Mon Dieu!* We might fall off!"

"There is a stone coping all around it. Come, courage, *chérie*. While we may catch a *bronchite*, we may prevent the devil catching a soul."

A few moments later the two venerable ladies, still in their nightcaps, quilted satin petticoats, dressing jackets, slippers and fur pelisses, stole forth, candleless and frightened, along the dark passage and up the tiny stair to the mansard roof. They crept along, stooping low, holding their breath. Suddenly the silence was broken by human speech. The sisters strained their ears, but in vain. No words were audible, nothing but a faint murmur and the ripple of stifled laughter.

Never was there a more trying situation. They could not pounce out upon the guilty pair, for their petticoats were too short. They could discern nothing of the fair enslaver on the other side of the area, but they heard quite distinctly the feminine quality of her voice.

They felt that, having gathered evidence, they should now descend. They were about to move, when from the skylight on the opposite roof a head emerged, surmounted by a row of curling pins, decorated with diminutive pink bows. It was followed by a familiar face and a pink satin *peignoir*. It was Mrs. Bradish.

The old ladies crouched back in the shadow of their protecting skylight. So she, too, was on the scent! But, happily for the sinners, she could discover nothing, and presently retreated.

Back in their room, Agathe sought pen and paper and indited a note to Jehan, armed with which she again issued forth into the dark corridor. Passing Jack's door, she paused, fancying she heard a movement within, but deciding that her nerves were unstrung, passed on to Jehan's chamber and placed her missive conspicuously on his dressing table. They could not sleep until he shared their painful knowledge. When the tale was told, he ejaculated his horror at such proceedings, and praised their courage and foresight. But his mind worked rapidly.

He recalled Jack's midnight epistle, his unusual devotion to his toilet, and what was more unusual, his cheerful acquiescence in his elder brother's departure for social functions. It had not always been thus. His mind flew at once to the American girl next door. He promised to look into the matter.

The following evening Jack was surprised and chagrined to find Jehan prone to domesticity. After all had retired, Jehan left his room with stealthy tread and noiselessly crossed the hall to the stairs mounting upward. On the third story a narrow passage led to an unused room where trunks were stored and lavender dried. Its window opened on the area opposite their neighbor's wall, leaving a space of about six feet between. He found a box and made himself comfortable by the opened window. His wall was in the shadow and he could not be seen. The wall opposite was palely visible. De Reizet had small doubt as to who would soon appear. So she had been amusing herself with Jack! Why?

He had heard that if an American girl could find nothing better to flirt with, she would flirt with a bedpost. She fancied that Jack would serve to keep her hand in.

Suddenly he saw her, framed in the window. The darkness behind obscured the outline of her head, but the pallor of her face could be seen. She was in evening dress, and something like a wreath of silver gleamed in her hair. A black fur boa lay about her shoulders. She leaned far out, her laughing face lit by mischief. Her usual somewhat haughty dignity had vanished, leaving only a naughty child reveling in her naughtiness.

"Ha-hum," said she.

"Ha-hum," answered De Reizet, feeling absurdly excited.

"Oh," said Sylvia, "I was so afraid that priggish brother of yours would keep you from coming. I've left mother losing her good money at Mrs. Francis-Bray's. She thinks I'm eating salad with the Duke. Wish you could drown your brother and then we'd—"

"What would you do then?" said De Reizet, leaning forward.

Sylvia uttered a faint cry and recoiled.

"Yes, it's me," said Jehan ungrammatically. "It's the priggish brother you want to drown. Mademoiselle, I don't apologize for living or being here, as it's my own house, though I regret to inconvenience you and—"

But Sylvia was herself again. "But you do inconvenience me," she said with a pretty sigh, "so why do you remain? For the—er—view?"

De Reizet nearly lost his balance in a profound bow. "The—view—is charming, but I admit I am here for a reason. Jack—"

"Jack isn't a reason. He's just a delightful boy, and you're interfering *most* unkindly in his affair. Do you think that's nice of you?"

De Reizet frowned at this flippancy, but as it was dark the offender remained unimpressed. "It is his affair of which I speak. Do you think it is right or kind to cause a boy of fifteen to lose his sleep because of an affair—"

"It depends on the nature of the af-

fair, monsieur." She leaned both elbows on the window ledge and gazed across the gulf with appealing candor.

"Mademoiselle, you mock; you treat it lightly."

"You surely don't want me to commit suicide down there in that horrid, dirty area!"

"This is a serious matter. Your mother—"

"Don't mention her. You little know how serious it is. You see, she went out on our roof last night and heard. She thinks it was her maid, and sent me up here tonight to catch the naughty creature. I have. Isn't she shocking? Suppose your aunts do the same, and find you here! How will you explain it?"

"I'd tell the truth."

"And they'd ask why you didn't go away at once. Really, I can't understand how you can do such unconventional things. As for me, I'm surprised and disappointed; and to set you a good example, I'm off. Good night, Monsieur de Reizet. I won't tell Jack what you've done."

"Mademoiselle—a moment. Don't go."

"Sylvia relented. "Not so loud, please. Mother might appear on the roof again. Hurry."

"You said your mother was angry. I trust you won't be made to suffer."

"Not much. I've bribed the maid to take the scolding and two of my best blouses. But please, monsieur—I'm not joking now." Her voice was sweet, with tender pleading. "Don't scold Jack. It has been all my fault. We've been so happy being friends, and truly I haven't done him any harm."

De Reizet felt a sudden jealous hatred for the innocent Jack.

"But really," she concluded, "I do consider the conventions. So good night."

"Wait—just a moment. I shall be anxious to learn how your mother accepts your explanations. And don't you want to hear how Jack— As we don't meet often elsewhere, if you could come here tomorrow evening for a moment—"

"Certainly not."

"In case you change your mind I'll be here. You see, my aunts think it's our footman, Philippe. I suppose I'll have to bribe him and give him part of my wardrobe. You see how far-reaching is the result of wrongdoing. It will cost me at least two waistcoats. So in case you want to hear—"

"Good night, monsieur."

"Good night, mademoiselle."

The next evening, Monsieur de Reizet, guardian of domestic proprieties, was promptly at the window. After he had waited in chilly discomfort for nearly an hour, a wad of paper hurtled across the chasm and fell at his feet. Vainly he strained a longing gaze. There was no sign of living creature. Having regained his room, he opened the note, although it was addressed to Jack. Again, as elder brother and guardian, he excused this act of perfidy. Thus ran the note:

DEAREST:

This is for you and you only, but I know that inquisitive brother of yours will read it, calling it duty, not curiosity. Alas, we can't meet at the window any more. Some people are *so* intrusive. This is just to tell you that our domestic horizon is again calm, thanks to the kindness of the maid and the beauty of my two blouses, now hers. I don't suppose you'll ever get this, as your brother won't want you to find out what he did. If you don't speak of it, I won't, and your brother shall keep his guilty secret. To look at him, one would never imagine him capable of such behavior. Sad, isn't it?

Fondly,

SYLVIA.

VIII

MADAME PETAN meanwhile had her hands full. There was the Duke coming daily on all sorts of pretexts, basking in Sylvia's smiles, for smile she did, thanks to Petan's advice to her to be diplomatic. Mrs. Bradish reflected this happy condition, and smiled, too. She was somewhat puzzled by Sylvia's docility, but the girl seemed so sincerely happy that she concluded love for once had joined hands with wisdom.

One December afternoon about two o'clock Petan and Sylvia were on their way to a shop near the Gare St. Lazare.

It was raining, as it had been for months, it seemed. Within sight of their destination, they were abruptly brought to a halt by a dripping gendarme, who explained that the streets were flooded under three feet of water and that the shop could be reached only by foot. The chauffeur's umbrella was in the motor, and armed with this, the two descended and hurried on.

A surprising sight met their eyes. Where usually vehicles and human beings made a whirlpool of complexities, there lay a great quiet lake. Within the station engines stood useless; an army of officials could only watch that invincible enemy creep higher and higher over the submerged tracks, while telephones became dumb, and electricity fizzled to darkness.

Sylvia and Petan stood, silent also, in that silent crowd which edged the lake, while rain fell steadily and faces paled with unspoken apprehension. In the distance the roar of Paris could be heard like an echo of former arrogance, and all the while the flood crept across the square into the neighboring streets, filtering through barricades into cellars and vestibules. The two women pushed their way through the crowd into a side street. Pausing on the curb for an opportunity to cross, Madame Petan gave a stifled gasp. There, not ten feet away, was the hero of her almost forgotten midnight adventure! He was holding his umbrella over the Duc de Petrinac, who, with creased trousers rolled high over mud-splashed spats, picked his way fastidiously through puddles.

At that instant, De Reizet espied Sylvia, and to her companion's amazement, raised his hat, to which Sylvia responded with dignity. Petan nearly collapsed then and there. Who was he? Would he recognize her, and betray her? Her nimble imagination was already at work on some lie of subtle audacity, when the Duke also saw them, and nimbly skipping the swollen gutter, dragged De Reizet to their side. Petan caught a gleam of mischievous recognition from two gray eyes, which she returned by a glare of stony denial; then her nerves received another shock as Sylvia pleas-

antly greeted both men and introduced "Monsieur de Reizet."

Petan's head whirled. What a situation! Her midnight supper companion and Sylvia's knight were one and the same! Yet little did he dream that she, Petan, held the secret of his passion. Little did he know that her ear had been ravished by his ardent letters, and her eye by that dim vision of exquisite sentiment near that garden fence.

The Duke stepped ahead with Sylvia and De Reizet's umbrella, while the latter fell behind with Madame Petan.

"We meet again," he said suavely.

"Fate is inscrutable," she replied.

De Reizet regarded the couple ahead and sighed; the sigh was echoed by Petan. A lover's pain was touching.

"Monsieur sighs. Alas, I, too, find it a pity."

De Reizet turned toward her. "You know about it?" he asked.

"All," replied she. "Monsieur may have confidence in me, for mademoiselle has trusted me with her tender secret."

De Reizet's thoughts flew to the Duke, for whom else could the woman mean? Something within him rose in angry revolt.

"Mademoiselle loves?" he queried.

Petan smiled at him through narrowed lids. "Behold, monsieur, how she is radiant with the ardor with which she loves. I am her loyal friend in the matter, for knowing the excellence of monsieur's family and the rigid goodness of his life, I could wish nothing better for my treasure. She relies on me. So wholly does she confide in my discretion that she has even honored me with extracts from certain letters which do honor to the sentiments which inspired them."

Just then the quartette came to a halt at a corner. De Reizet stepped forward, and the Duke, jostled by the crowd, found himself beside Madame Petan. She grasped both him and the opportunity. In a trice the two couples were separated in the confusion. Petan cried: "They went this way, I'm sure," and dragged the distracted Duke precipitately along. Meanwhile Sylvia and De Reizet fled along in the opposite direction in search of the vanished Petan.

"Oh, dear!" wailed Sylvia. "She has my list, and I'm getting as wet as the pavement. Do put me in a cab and take me home."

But empty cabs were not to be had. De Reizet had an inspiration.

"Mademoiselle, cabs are scarce, and both slow and filled with microbes. Yonder on the corner is the *Metropolitain*. Allow me to take you home by that, for there is a station near your house, and in fifteen minutes you will be there."

Sylvia and De Reizet found themselves squeezed side by side on a small seat. Opposite them a stout gentleman was hidden behind his *Figaro*, and beside him dozed a tired workman in a blue blouse.

"Do you mind?" asked De Reizet.

"I like it," said Sylvia. "It's the first time I was ever here. Mother thinks it too democratic. This is, I suppose, the real French people. How in earnest they look!"

"They are. They work, mademoiselle, and therein lies their dignity."

"And yet I have heard Paris has no soul."

"Not from a Frenchman did you hear that. Foreigners judge France from the *Folies Bergère* and the shop windows. It has both heart and soul. What do they know of France? Have they been in touch with the country life where people live chastely by arduous and honest toil? Have they known those great men living in unfashionable quarters of Paris, hand in hand with the sciences and arts, unconscious of the glitter and tinsel of the Paris you know? Mademoiselle, here in this great city, which harbors, I admit, much that is evil, there are lives filled with worthy ambitions. And the best class of French women do not devote their whole lives to vainglory and to bridge."

Sylvia turned and smiled up at his earnest face. "You are rapping the knuckles of my countrywomen, aren't you? You judge Americans by those you meet here, as you say I do the French."

"But, mademoiselle, how else can I judge? In what do they interest themselves? They have left their country and their duties there. From a French

point of view, it seems incomprehensible how a wealthy, free class can deliberately leave their own country, relatives, ties and responsibilities and migrate to a foreign country simply to enjoy themselves. Fancy me, my aunts, Paul and our friends packing up and settling in New York! Have Americans no roots?"

Sylvia recalled Utica. There had been roots there which held lives in a firm grip, interwoven with common interests. She still felt the pain of having been wrenched from her place there to be transplanted to a foreign soil.

"Tell me," she said at last, smiling, "why you told Jack you wished that I'd go back to America and stay there!"

De Reizet was taken unawares. "Oh, really, did I—er—say that?"

"You certainly did. Why?"

"You're not going, are you?" There was dismay in his voice.

"That isn't answering my question."

"Well, you're a square peg in a round hole over here."

"Then, as a friend, you want me to take the next steamer?"

"Heaven forbid!"

Just then the train moved out from a station and Sylvia glimpsed the word "Quatre Septembre" in large blue letters on the wall. She half rose, saying: "We're certainly on the wrong train!"

De Reizet looked blank. "Good heavens!" he ejaculated. "I do believe you're right! We must have taken the wrong turning when we came in. So sorry. We must be halfway to Vincennes."

Something in his manner lacked sincerity, and Sylvia, controlling a mad desire to laugh, said sternly: "How could you have made a mistake? Even I saw those signs. You did it on purpose; you—"

De Reizet tried to look contrite, and failed. "What if I did, mademoiselle? Don't look like that. I wanted to talk to you. It was my only chance. It does you no harm to lend me an hour. I'm going away tomorrow—"

"Going away?" Surely there was dismay in *her* voice now.

"Yes, to Amsterdam, on business which may transform my life. I hope to

put through a certain matter which may make me a comparatively rich man, and that for many reasons opens possibilities—"

"What possibilities?" asked Sylvia.

De Reizet looked up and shook his gloved finger at her. "Wait till I come back, and then perhaps I'll tell you. And yet—and yet—"

"And yet you want me to go back to America!"

"I—er—did. Why shouldn't I? You bother me; you're an aggravation; you upset all my theories. You appear to be one thing and act another. You are a delight seen through an—iron fence. I haven't wanted to like you, yet I do. You represent all of which I disapprove—worldliness, extravagance, unrest; yet there is a look in your eyes sometimes—"

He made a gesture of helpless despair and smiled. Across the aisle a lady in plain black entered and sat down—Mrs. Francis-Bray. She saw them, and saw also that they were too absorbed in each other to notice anything less than a bomb, and leaned back in her corner with tactful quiet. Vincennes had been reached and left behind; they were now on their homeward way.

"You are frank," Sylvia said. "I'll be so, too, monsieur. I know exactly what you think of me and everything and everyone connected with me, and much of what you say is true, while some things you think are untrue. But you blame me in your thoughts, forgetting that we are all to an extent in the clutch of circumstance! I live a stranger among these people. I am homesick for old friends, old ways, old simplicities. I am envied, and I'd rather be loved.

"As for mother's foolish quarrel about your land—I want you to know it was never mine, and that I understand why you cling to your home. Mother, you see, simply can't comprehend preferring a sentiment to a cheque."

Suddenly there was a grinding sound of breaks as the train came to an abrupt standstill in the darkness. Passengers sprang to their feet and women screamed. The conductor flung open the door and leaned out, the sparse electric lights on the dingy wall outside sputtering out

as he did so. Then the light in the train vanished and Sylvia felt De Reizet's strong hand take hers in the darkness. In a moment the conductor reappeared with the information that the tracks ahead were flooded and that their train had been signaled to return to its last station. Passengers remained standing, talking excitedly while the train moved back slowly through the darkness.

"When will you return from Amsterdam?" she asked him as they regained the surface and he put her in a cab.

"In a week perhaps. Will you wish me luck?"

"With all my heart," she cried gaily.

IX

MRS. BRADISH fully sympathized with King Canute's feelings, when, standing on her threshold, she beheld water lapping her doormat. The rain continued to fall with unflagging energy, and the Seine to spread through Paris. It had extinguished her furnace and her electric lights, inundated her tiled cellars and even the haughty precincts of her kitchen, obliging her to have meals brought in boats from a distant restaurant, to be hoisted through her second story windows ignominiously in baskets.

On that memorable "Black Friday" Paris lay beneath a pall of fear. Traffic was largely suspended and the Lyon railroad was the sole remaining exit from what many people thought was a doomed city. Its inhabitants were occupied in packing their belongings or removing furniture and valuables to attics. The vaults of banks had disgorged their important papers, jewels or plate, and these were being hidden in all sorts of extraordinary places, while burglars smacked their lips and issued from their lairs on voyages of predatory discovery.

Mrs. Bradish's experience had taught her that good may be derived even from evil. A philanthropic desire to be of use to those who might be useful to her filled her breast, as she stood balanced on the plank which led from her second story window to a punt anchored before it two feet below. The Avenue Montaigne and

its neighboring streets were now tranquil canals where boatmen called and small boys fished from drawing room windows. Her mind ran up and down those inundated streets, searching for someone to whom she might cast bread upon those waters, with faith that it might return to her. At last she had it—Mrs. Francis-Bray. That lady's home must be indeed in a most precarious situation. In a trice Mrs. Bradish was in her punt being poled toward that destination.

She found Mrs. Francis-Bray in her bedroom on the second floor, surrounded by her Lares and Penates properly belonging below. She received Mrs. Bradish with cheerful equanimity, and explained that the authorities had commanded her to leave the house as the Seine plainly had intentions on the foundations, and therefore she had engaged rooms at Versailles, though she feared a yacht would have to be chartered to take her there as the trains were then running through a foot of water.

"Perhaps you are right," sighed Mrs. Bradish, "but I don't dare to leave my house. The foundations are all right, but I have small faith in the servants, and there are many valuables there."

Mrs. Francis-Bray smiled. "But you have Monsieur de Reizet next door," she said. "Surely he is a protection."

"We—that is, I—don't know him very well. There never has been any intimacy between us as neighbors."

"Really? What a pity," replied Mrs. Francis-Bray in a tone of commiseration. "Some of that really good French society is so conservative. However, have patience. Of course he is spoiled. I know him intimately, and like him so much that I'm sorry when I see foolishly ambitious mothers running after him as they do."

Mrs. Bradish looked a bit bewildered. "Run after—him! Why, he isn't anybody in particular—just something or other in the War Office."

Mrs. Francis-Bray opened astonished eyes. "My dear friend, don't you know that De Reizet is the man who meets all the royalties when they come to Paris, and goes to visit them with the Presi-

dent? You see, a man is chosen for that position who is a gentleman and accustomed to ceremonies. He went to Spain with Loubet when he visited the King, and when the Czar and Czarina were here De Reizet arranged everything—quite lived with them, in fact. Bless you, De Reizet can claim acquaintance with more crowned heads than any man in France.”

Now, while Mrs. Bradish digested this striking information at Mrs. Francis-Bray's, still other surprises were being prepared for her elsewhere. That morning Madame Petan had received a note from De Reizet, asking her to come to the upper window overlooking the area. Across the open space he outlined a scheme for saving his neighbors from the ravages of the flood.

“We are all in danger,” he said. “The Seine will continue to rise. It is imperative that Mademoiselle Bradish leave Paris at once. My aunts and brother have already left for our chateau in Brittany, and I leave tomorrow. Mademoiselle—and her mother—must do the same. I go to visit the Vicomte who invited Madame Bradish to his chateau the first night he met her at my cousin's dinner. No date was then arranged. I now arrange it; it is tomorrow. You will tell madame that a member of the Relief Committee told you that he formally warned her of increasing danger, and that safety lies only in flight.

“Tomorrow morning she will receive a telegram from the Vicomte inviting her and her daughter to come to his chateau near Tours. The best train leaves the Gare de Lyon at three o'clock. I will be in the forward third class carriage, but will not arrive at the chateau till after Madame Bradish. I may add that as the train is sure to be crowded, mademoiselle should take the air whenever it stops at stations for a few minutes.”

Petan was nearly speechless as this fine plot was unfolded, but her delight knew no bounds. “I am to tell mademoiselle?”

“Heaven forbid!” cried De Reizet. “She is to know nothing that her mother does not know. And there is one further detail. You must go also. Now

if, in place of her maid, you would deign—”

“Affection knows no class distinction, monsieur. Leave that to me.”

Next morning came the telegram promised by De Reizet, and the now thoroughly alarmed lady jumped at the invitation and left Paris with such dispatch that by nightfall the Vicomte bowed them into their suite of rooms in his ancient chateau on the Loire.

When all had retired, Mrs. Bradish started on a voyage of discovery. She found that the long windows of her room, the dressing room and Sylvia's room beyond all opened on a stone balcony which ran along the whole façade of the chateau. Petan's chamber opened on it also farther down the passage and between theirs and hers were a couple of vacant rooms.

Their own quarters were sparsely but splendidly furnished, though devoid of any signs of that comfortable luxury to which Mrs. Bradish was accustomed. “Humph!” said she. “It's as cold as charity, and there isn't a sign of a bath, and I don't believe the curtains have been taken down and cleaned since the reign of Louis the Fourteenth.”

But Sylvia was dancing a gay *pas seul*. “It's enchanting! The furniture has dear, real little wormholes in it, not just holes bored by an awl. That naughty, clever Cardinal Mazarin once slept in my bed, and there's a hole in the wall of our dressing room where they used to stick their heads to get powdered without soiling their fine clothes. Oh! Mother dear, look!”

Mrs. Bradish did look, and recoiled, staring at a small black object which moved toward the fire. It was a turtle, scaly as to paws and indifferent as to manner. Sylvia lifted it with a laugh to the light of one of the candles. “Look!” she cried. “It's name is inlaid on its back in gold! It's Madame de Pompadour, who bit off Montespan's leg over a cabbage leaf—the naughty dear!”

Mrs. Bradish pulled out her hatpins and threw her hat on the bed. “Sylvia,” she said, “put that beast in the passage at once. I refuse to share the room with it. If I had my way I'd

make Madame de Pompadour into soup."

Sylvia retired, and fifteen minutes later Madame Petan came to assist her to dress. "Petan," Sylvia whispered, "isn't it fun? Never was there such a darling as you. Mother hasn't the remotest idea he is in the house! I was terrified at the last station for fear she'd see me talking with him. He told me all about his scheme and the way he arranged it with you!"

"Humph!" said the dragon.

"Yes, and at the last station he told me why he is here. Petan, you can't imagine what an important matter hangs on this visit of his! He brought back a little packet from Amsterdam which means everything to him: fortune, honor, and—er—something else; he hasn't told me that yet. You see, this packet is very valuable—perhaps jewels, I don't know. He has to deliver it personally to someone who lives near here. He said that if it was lost it would ruin him. Someone has trusted him, and his future itself hangs on his delivering it."

Surprises were in store for them at dinner. As they went downstairs they met the Duc de Petrinac. Mrs. Bradish was of course pleased, but Sylvia was distinctly cross and showed it. "He's getting on my nerves, mother," she said.

A moment later Mrs. Bradish had another surprise, less agreeable. As they entered the principal *salon*, Jehan de Reizet rose from the piano and came forward, hand outstretched in suave greeting for both mother and daughter, affecting an air of surprise at finding them there. Just then the groom of the chambers announced Mrs. Francis-Bray, and the cup of surprises filled to the brim.

"Well, mademoiselle, here we are. Am I not clever?" De Reizet seated himself beside Sylvia after dinner in the embrasure of a large window.

"If mother ever finds out—" said she. "But something has happened—look! She is talking to Mrs. Francis-Bray quite pleasantly instead of looking hatpins at me, though I am talking to the enemy of our house."

"There is a reason for that," said De

Reizet, "also for her presence here. You see, I called on her and—well, I explained a few matters. Truly, mademoiselle, I have worked hard the past twenty-four hours arranging all this."

Sylvia trilled with laughter. "Did you tell mother the business reason that brought you here?"

"No. That was only for you." He drew from his inner pocket a small package and laid it in Sylvia's lap. It was done up in heavy blue paper, tied with red tape, and sealed with the arms of France. Just then the Duke strolled across the room and joined them. "Jehan," he said, "do you think it quite safe to carry that important document so carelessly? You may not know it, mademoiselle, but this clever cousin of mine has been putting through important business lately. That packet holds his future—perhaps the future of France."

De Reizet replaced the packet as Sylvia nodded gravely. "If I were Pandora, I'd beg to see its contents," she said, "but secrets are heavy to carry, and I don't like burdens."

"Quite right. By the way, Jehan, be careful what you do with it at night. I wish the Vicomte had a safe."

"I wouldn't trust one if he had," answered De Reizet. "A scoundrel goes to a safe like a bee to a honey pot. No, it is safer with me for a day or two."

"Under your pillow?" laughed the Duke.

"Oh, no—a safer place than that."

"Mademoiselle is wide-eyed with curiosity," said the Duke.

Sylvia became wide-eyed with indignation. "Not at all. Nothing would induce me to know where he keeps it. As I said, I don't like burdens." She rose. "There is mother beckoning, and that means bed. Of course she is tired after a flood and a journey."

A few moments later, candles in hand, host and guests mounted the stairs. The Vicomte said good night at its head, as his apartments were in the wing opposite. The Duke accompanied Mrs. Bradish down the passage toward their rooms, passing that of Petan, who was awake within. His own room proved

to be next to that of Mrs. Bradish, and Margot's opened into his. Sylvia went on into her own room, and Mrs. Bradish, divesting herself quickly of her dress and pearls without waiting for Petan, got into a comfortable wrapper and went through their common dressing room into Sylvia's chamber for a chat.

Meanwhile Petan, in a gray flannel wrapper and felt slippers, had softly opened her door and was modestly creeping along the darkened hall toward her duties, when her attention was arrested by a curious sound of something scraping on the floor. The sound was faint and irregular, and appeared to come from the Duke's chamber, the door of which was ajar. As she listened, the sound came nearer, toward her. She could see nothing, though a pale light lay on the oaken floor from the windows looking into the court. The sound was persistent and incisive, cutting the profound silence with teasing delicacy. Now it seemed only a few feet away, in front of her, close to the wall below the windows where shadows lay.

Petan stooped and listened. Yes, it was there, scraping along toward her. She bent and put out her hand. It came in contact with a small, hard object which immediately became motionless and silent. "One of those accursed turtles," thought Petan, and picked it up. Then was explained the mystery of that scraping sound. To one of its scaly paws clung a tiny bit of paper. Petan picked it off and held it to the light. The little black paw and the paper were both covered with some sticky substance smelling of oil and turpentine. Petan smelt and fingered it at a loss, then recognized it as putty—quite fresh and adhesive. With a disgusted grimace she put the turtle down and scraped her finger free of the sticky paper against the window ledge, and went on to Mrs. Bradish's room. Finding her room empty, she went on to Sylvia's. The girl was still fully dressed perched on the arm of her mother's chair, ruffling that lady's reddish pompadour caressingly, while gazing silently into the fire.

Mrs. Bradish rose presently and kissed

her daughter good night. "Don't forget to put cold cream on your face, dear," she said, "and wash it off with warm water. This country air roughens the skin." Then she went on into her own room.

In a moment a shrill cry resounded through the silent house from Mrs. Bradish's room. The door flew open, and that lady appeared on the threshold ghastly, distraught. "My pearls!" she cried. "Gone! Stolen!"

"Mother!" "Madame!" Sylvia and Petan stared at the apparition in pink silk and denuded head, then flew into the farther room. Mrs. Bradish followed them, pointing tragically at her dressing table, where a reddish pompadour balanced on a candlestick, but certainly no pearls met their eyes. Meanwhile feet were heard running and doors slamming in the house, and someone knocked at the door.

Petan opened it, and the Duke appeared on the threshold with an alarmed face, in a rich dressing gown of brocade.

"Madame, what is it? I heard a cry."

Mrs. Bradish whisked her pompadour out of sight and again pointed to the dressing table while Sylvia explained, and others came running down the passage—Margot's nurse in a skimp flannel petticoat over her nightdress, the Vicomte still in evening dress, De Reizet in his shirt sleeves and Mrs. Francis-Bray in a black satin kimono. They crowded into the room, with two or three servants, while all talked at once. The Vicomte was apparently both annoyed and incredulous, until De Reizet suddenly called their attention to the long window opening on the balcony. They all stared open-mouthed while Mrs. Bradish collapsed in a chair and burst into tears.

"Neatly done," said De Reizet, pointing to the window, where a pane of glass near the handle had been cut out. Through this aperture the rascal's hand had opened the window for his entrance—the dressing table stood before it. The Duke stepped out on the balcony and in a moment held up before them the pane of glass—cleanly cut. In the center of

the pane was a round smear, and around it smeary finger prints. The Duke rubbed these, smelling his fingers.

"Don't do that," cried the Vicomte. "We might trace him by the prints."

"How stupid of me!" said the Duke. "But quick, Jehan. The thief cannot have gotten far away. Perhaps he's in the park. Vicomte, we'll rouse all the men on the place, with your permission, and give chase."

The next moment the three women were left alone with the Vicomte, who, with his dressing gown drawn over a pair of birdlike ankles, assured them in a trembling voice that he would protect them. He threw logs on the fire, tossed a pair of pink satin stays from a comfortable chair and prepared to make himself at home while Mrs. Bradish recounted details.

It appeared she had left her pearls on the table and gone to Sylvia's room, then to her dressing room; and it had been fully twenty minutes before, on returning to her room, she had discovered her loss. The odd part of it was that a diamond brooch which had lain with the necklace had not been touched, though an emerald of great value decorated its center.

The Vicomte explained that doubtless some sound had frightened off the thief, who had clambered from the balcony by the ivied wall and fled across the park. Undoubtedly she had been "spotted" when leaving the house in Paris, conspicuously carrying her jewel case, and from there followed to the station and the chateau. He consoled her by the assurance that the pawnshop would no doubt receive the booty, and thus it could be recovered. As soon as the men should return, a telegram would be sent to the station for expedition at the earliest moment in the morning, notifying the police in all directions.

In the midst of these cogitations, the idea occurred to Petan that the thief, instead of escaping, might be concealed within for further depredation when all should be abed. So on her own account she started on a voyage of discovery. She looked under the ponderous beds, behind curtains and into

wardrobes, aware that her strong right arm was as effective as that of the average burglar's. Their two rooms and dressing room were thoroughly searched, and then she went out to the balcony and peered over the rail into the park. In the distance she heard voices and discerned the searchers approaching the house minus the thief. As she was about to step in through the long window again, she saw, leaning against the wall, the pane of glass which had been cut out. She picked it up and turned it over. Its edges were clean cut, evidently by some sharp instrument, and its surface soiled. Suddenly she found her fingers sticky, and by the dim light through the open window discovered them to be greasy as well. She held them to her nose and detected the odor of oil and turpentine. Where had she smelt that before? In a flash she recalled the turtle and that bit of paper covered with fresh putty adhering to its paw, creeping along from the direction of the Duke's room.

Petan gasped and sat down suddenly on the railing in the darkness. Just then the object of her bewildering thoughts entered Mrs. Bradish's room followed by De Reizet. Both men still wore their overcoats and laid two revolvers among the silver accouterments of the dressing table.

"Of course you didn't find him," said Mrs. Bradish.

"Not a trace," replied De Reizet, his eyes on Sylvia in her pale blue trailing negligée and two long plaits of hair, where she stood leaning against the *cheminée*. The Duke pulled up a chair to the blaze and sat down. Petan, unobserved on the balcony in the darkness, shivering in her gray flannel dressing gown, remained motionless, eyes and ears alert.

"We must telegraph the first thing in the morning to Paris," said the Vicomte, holding his frail hands to the blaze. "Get Lepine on the rascal's trail."

"I thought," said De Reizet, "of sending a groom to Tours with a notice to their police, but I think the Vicomte is right, for the thief will undoubtedly

hide in Paris. It is safer for him than a wilderness."

"What would you advise, dear Duke?" said Mrs. Bradish.

"What they do," he replied. "I do, however, know one of the ablest men in Europe for that sort of thing, who happens to be in Paris. Of course it is merely a suggestion, but he's a sort of Sherlock Holmes, and more subtle and perhaps more efficacious, because he is not well known by the class of common criminals."

"You think he'd be better than an ordinary detective?" asked Mrs. Francis-Bray.

"Most certainly, if he'd take the case," the Duke replied. "But he is very independent—cares little for money and is usually absorbed in government affairs. A remarkable man. I've heard he was really the means of averting that last trouble between Russia and Poland."

"Oh, dear," said Sylvia, "he'd never bother with a pearl necklace."

"Perhaps not," said the Duke, "but as a personal favor to me he might be persuaded."

"Do beg him," cried Mrs. Bradish.

"I hardly like to take the responsibility," demurred the Duke. "You see, if he should fail—"

"Who is the man?" asked De Reizet. "Perhaps I know him."

"His name's Vaurigard, but I don't know his nationality. In any case, he is a remarkable personality. No, Jehan, I don't think you know him. I met him when I was ambassador to Berlin." The Duke turned to Mrs. Bradish. "Of course, madame, if you insist, I'll wire him in the morning and ask him as a favor to run down here; but, to be frank, there is one objection to employing him. He won't work unless he works alone, and in case he disappoints you—"

"Why won't he let others work with him?" asked Sylvia.

"He claims that the average detective works more for self-advertisement than for his employers, and that he muddles matters by publicity. Vaurigard follows his own trail and employs his own

methods, and won't brook interference. Therefore I really, after all, don't like to advise—"

"The responsibility is mine," said Mrs. Bradish. "Ah, here is some hot toddy. The dear Vicomte is so thoughtful. Now let us drink to the speedy recovery of my necklace. Sylvia, where is Petan? She ought to have some, too."

Petan heard, and swiftly sped along the balcony to her own room. A moment later, when Sylvia rapped at her door, she heard only a stentorian snore from within. The girl listened, but no other sign was vouchsafed, and wondering at the woman's indifference in so exciting a crisis, the girl returned to her mother's room. She found the oddly attired party standing about the steaming bowl, while the little Vicomte held aloft his glass, touching its brim with the others.

"Here's to crime detected and punished!" said the Duke.

X

THE following morning seemed long to each member of the party. Mrs. Francis-Bray spent it in her room; De Reizet, with a groom, rode across the country to the chateau where the Minister of War lay, still unconscious, but improving. Mrs. Bradish wrote twenty-one letters to friends on the Vicomte's best letter paper, ostensibly to assure these friends of her safety but in reality to show them how very smartly she was quartered. Postal card pictures accompanied each letter to show the splendor of her present habitation. She said nothing of drafts, turtles or the absence of a bathroom.

Sylvia wandered over the park, for the sun was shining. So long had it been since she had seen the world so radiant that she put the fact of her light-heartedness down to nature's beneficence. Also they had received news from Paris that the Seine remained stationary, so danger had been averted just in the nick of time.

According to Mrs. Bradish's com-

mand, the Duke had telegraphed to Paris for Monsieur Vaurigard, and everyone was relieved to receive the assurance of his speedy arrival by the three o'clock train that afternoon. At five everyone was congregated in the hall before the fire. Sylvia had insisted on having tea served according to Anglo-Saxon methods, and considerable confusion had been the result. A table had, after sundry and minute directions, been properly arranged while the Vicomte twittered with anxiety to please. When the tea was finally brought, it proved to be undrinkable, and the chagrined and bewildered butler had wrung his hands and called heaven and all the saints to witness that the cook could do no better. Mademoiselle had demanded that the water should be boiled. He was prepared to swear that it had been boiled, and—the tea within it! Man could do no more. Behold, was it not black and so beautifully bitter as to wither the tongue?

However, after explanations, fresh tea was brought, and even the Vicomte had begun to relax under its charm, when the sound of an approaching carriage was heard, and a few moments later, the longed-for Vaurigard was ushered into the circle. Sylvia, who remained in the background while introductions took place, was surprised by two things: one, that the newcomer apparently had almost forgotten the Duke and for a moment failed to place his identity among the three men. The second surprise was the fact that she herself had seen him before, where she could not recall. So occupied was she with this teasing familiarity that she remained quiet while the others all talked of the robbery, explaining, advising and detailing the vicissitudes of the night. Monsieur Vaurigard listened with polite attention, but Sylvia noticed that De Reizet occupied his attention more than the others. It was to him he deferred, and it was his account of the robbery to which he finally listened when the others had talked themselves to silence. But all the time Sylvia's memory was struggling with the problem of where and when she had seen that remarkable face and head before.

The Duke rose to pass the newcomer cream for his tea, and for a moment leaned above him, his face in the same line of Sylvia's vision. Suddenly she had it. Just so had she seen those two heads in the dim dinginess of a shabby café in Paris. For a moment she stared from one to the other, while an unreasoning fear rose in her heart, bewildering thought, chilling her body with an odd sense of baffled helplessness. Vaurigard was talking in a grave, controlled voice, businesslike and even well bred in manner and intonation. But Sylvia now recognized every line of that inscrutable face and tall, spare frame. The same heavy lids veiled the somber eyes; the same straight black hair lay smoothly against the finely modeled head. Yet the Duke had said he had not seen him since he had been stationed in Berlin, and they had apparently failed to recognize each other. Why? There was a reason; what was it? Why had the Duke uttered that careless lie, and why had Vaurigard pretended difficulty in recognizing the Duke? A short time ago she had seen them talking intimately, absorbed with papers which the Duke was explaining; yet now they greeted one another with the formal restraint of a slight acquaintance renewed after a long interval. Sylvia leaned back in her chair tense with concentrated thought, but could find no explanation.

"And now, monsieur," Mrs. Bradish was saying, "what can we do to assist you? You have all the facts; do you find any clue?"

Monsieur Vaurigard put down his cup with deliberation and crossed one leg over the other. Sylvia noticed the admirable shape of his hands and the impression of reserved force in every gesture. "It seems a simple robbery," he said quietly, "but its very simplicity may be the difficulty. To you the theory of the thief's descent from the balcony seems the most probable. It does not to me, for the very reason that it was made so evident. This chateau is immense and could be entered easily. A man could have hidden within it for hours. He might even be in it now somewhere in the maze of rooms and

corridors. However, that is unlikely, but I doubt very much his having fled at once as you thought, right across the park. He would know, naturally, that the first thing you would have done was precisely what you did do—give chase. Had he fled as you fancied, the chances are that you would have caught him, for the park is walled."

"That sounds logical," said De Reizet. "We have been dull. He probably quietly remained snug and warm till we were all asleep again and then got away clear."

"But if he did, why didn't he take something else while he was about it?" asked Mrs. Francis-Bray. "He could have done so easily."

"He had a fortune in his pocket. The fact that he left that valuable brooch behind shows his nerves were poorly under control, and he took no risks. I fancy he was unarmed, and more impulsive than courageous."

Sylvia leaned forward. "It sounds just like Sherlock Holmes," she said. "I don't see how you can enter into a criminal's mind so cleverly. They can't think along the same lines as we do."

Vaurigard looked at her for the first time with attention, and Sylvia had the impression that those narrow eyes looked her over with lightning rapidity, as though he was in some way familiar with her personality and interested in it. "The human mind, mademoiselle," he said, "invariably thinks along one line in common—that of self-preservation. No man has ever so devoted a friend as himself. But, pardon me, are we not wasting time?"

"What do you want to do first?" asked the Duke.

"I should like to see the room and balcony, the pane of glass and then, with the Vicomte's permission, the park and house. May I be permitted to go thoroughly over the latter?"

"With pleasure," said their host. "Shall I go with you?"

"No, thanks," said Vaurigard. "I should like to go about as quietly as possible on account of the servants, for there is no proof that they are not implicated. I take it for granted that no

one has told them in what capacity I am here, as I requested in my telegram."

"Not a soul knows," said the Vicomte. "They think you a guest—as you are."

"Thank you," replied Vaurigard. He bowed separately to the three ladies and left the room. The party separated, to rest before dinner. Halfway up the stairs Sylvia was overtaken by De Reizet. "Wait," he said in a low voice. "Can't you give me half an hour? Come to the library. I haven't seen you all day. And I worked so hard to get you here."

Sylvia wanted to accede to this simple request, but she was too confused by the past half-hour to trust herself. With her mind filled with half-formed suspicions of De Reizet's distinguished cousin, coupled with a vehement and unreasoning fear of she hardly knew what, she needed to be alone. How could she accuse the Duke of a deliberate falsehood on the mere evidence of a memory, itself founded on a passing impression? It would appear to be the vagary of an imaginative girl, as unwarranted as wicked. What reason could she bring forward for such deception to support her statement? None. It would be highly offensive and absurd from anyone's point of view but her own. As for her mother, to her even less than to De Reizet could she voice her suspicions. These thoughts flew through her mind while she ran one finger to and fro on the polished rail, hesitating.

"Come," pleaded De Reizet.

Then Sylvia looked up with a smile. "You would shock this French household by a *lête-à-lête*. They aren't used to Americans."

"You introduced an innovation in tea here; why not an innovation in social intercourse?" De Reizet paused, studying her face. "What is it, mademoiselle? Something is troubling you. You smile, but not with your eyes. Tell me."

Sylvia looked away and then back into his face, an instant before so happy and now grave. What did she fear for him—for now she knew her fear was for him, undefined yet persistent. She remembered the packet, and that his fu-

ture, perhaps the future of France even, hung on it, and—yes, that her own was also allied with it, though unacknowledged. Yet, what could she say?

Sylvia folded both hands on the railing and looked at him gravely. A new womanliness breathed from her earnest face from which raillery had fled. If what she was about to say betrayed that which maiden modesty should conceal, she no longer cared. It was not the moment for egotisms. "Monsieur," she said, "I am troubled—for you. Men treat women's intuitions lightly sometimes, but who knows what unrecognized voice speaks for us through them? I am afraid of that Monsieur Vaurigard—why I cannot tell you. But when he came I felt danger come with him. Who is he? Why did he come for so small a matter as a pearl necklace when your cousin says he occupies himself usually only with matters of State? Yet he came on a telegram from your cousin, all the way from Paris."

De Reizet smiled, though, now that he thought of it, Vaurigard's promptness did seem extraordinarily obliging. "It was good of him," he replied, "but he did it because of his friendship in the past with Paul."

Sylvia leaned forward, her face alight and eager. "But you heard the Duke say he had not seen him since he was in Berlin. How long ago was that?"

"Really, mademoiselle," said De Reizet vaguely, "let me think. I think it was six—no, seven years ago."

"And was their intimacy then so close that a telegram from your cousin seven years after should bring Monsieur Vaurigard here to track a commonplace robbery of a pearl necklace? And I know he is German, not French."

De Reizet looked grave. "What you say is very disturbing, mademoiselle, but, after all, I feel that this time your intuitions are at fault. The robbery was certainly committed, and he happened to be in Paris, probably idle. Besides, how do you know he is German? His name is French, and so is the correctness of his accent."

"The frightful cut of his coat is German," said Sylvia, "and no one but a

German would, in cold blood, wear such boots."

De Reizet threw back his head with a laugh. "Oh, woman, woman! To what are we subjected in thy scale of approbation!" His face was again untroubled, even happy. "However, mademoiselle, I am not ungrateful. I shall never go out alone, and will sleep with my door locked, a good revolver near at hand. But there is a point that you may have overlooked, and tomorrow I shall call your attention to it, for tomorrow I shall be able to deliver my packet."

"What is the point?" begged Sylvia, bewildered.

De Reizet smiled into her eyes. "You were—troubled—for me! No, you can't deny it, and that I cherish. Tomorrow I will give you my—thanks."

Sylvia blushed, laughed and ran up three steps and from there shook a finger at him. "How illogical is man. One minute you assure me there is nothing for which to be grateful, and insinuate that I am a foolish, suspicious person, and the next you promise me gratitude for what you deny exists. However, if you're found murdered in your bed, I'll say 'I told you so.'"

De Reizet ran up the intervening steps and seized her hand. His head bent above it; she felt his lips pressed close—once, twice, three times on her palm. "Mademoiselle—*chérie!*" His voice was indistinct, but his eyes spoke. Then, with a gesture of impatient restraint, he turned and ran swiftly down the stairs. At the bottom he looked up to that slender, white-robed figure. "*A demain!*" he called to her softly. "*A demain!*"

An hour later De Reizet was in his room alone writing letters. He had left the door open, and was interrupted by a soft tap. He looked up and saw Vaurigard standing there, self-possessed and erect. "May I come in?" he asked, and entered without waiting for response. De Reizet rose courteously, for something in his visitor's personality exacted respect.

"How are you getting on?" De Reizet asked. "Any clue?"

Vaurigard smiled. "I can't give away professional secrets, but I've been all over the house and grounds with satisfactory results. Don't think I'm here to ransack your room. Only stopped for a moment's chat, for the country in winter depresses me. This chateau is enormous. Its rows of silent rooms are like so many prison cells."

Vaurigard had crossed the room and perched his tall frame on the window ledge.

"Monsieur, have you ever been in a prison?"

The abrupt question startled De Reizet. "No," he replied. "Have you?"

"Yes, more than once—business took me there. A prison is not the place to breed the softer virtues. There are times when the part I play in sending my fellow beings to prison is not to my taste; my imagination remains with them there, shut in with their sense of helplessness and rage, and doubtless some are innocent."

De Reizet crossed to a table and took up a box of cigarettes, which he offered to his guest, holding a lighted match for him. The tiny flame flared, revealing for an instant the impassive face and lidded eyes.

Vaurigard rose, stretching his tall frame. He crossed to De Reizet and tapped his chest lightly with sinewy fingers so that the packet rustled beneath his touch. "You and I," he said, "are what we are through no fault or virtue of our own. It would bore you and me to be criminals, eh?"

"But I must be off. I promised to meet Madame Bradish before dinner to report. I am pleased to be able to tell her that in all probability she will recover her stolen property."

Vaurigard was at the door as De Reizet impulsively asked "How? When?"

But his visitor was already down the hall, looking back, shrugging his shoulders.

Meanwhile Sylvia had gone to her room and rung for Petan. That lady came with alacrity, though she had pleaded a headache and remained in her room all day. She found her charge curled up in a huge chair in the twilight,

very still and silent. Petan moved about the room lighting the candles. There seemed to be a pall of reticence in the room. At last Sylvia spoke.

"Come here, Petan," she said. "I want to talk to you. Here, in that chair, close to me, for I don't want mother to hear. But I've got to tell someone or die of spontaneous combustion."

Thereupon Sylvia told the whole story of her discovery in Paris, her suspicions and the sense of fear which oppressed her. To her surprise Petan neither ridiculed nor flouted, but listened with attention.

"What do you think of it, Petan?" demanded Sylvia. "Do say something."

"What am I," replied the older woman, "to have opinions on such matters? You tell me to say something, *chérie*, and I am saying things; but to say what I think is another matter."

"What do you think, Petan?"

"I'll tell you in twenty-four hours and not before. This is an admirable opportunity for proving that a woman can hold her tongue. But leave things to me. If the devil is a member of this house party, it will be your Petan who will discover him."

That evening Petan dined in her room off three cups of strong black coffee, and then invited herself into Margot's room next door where the English nurse was putting Margot to bed. This, as usual, was a ceremony fraught with hilarity, for Margot saw to it that no dullness burdened the affair. At last, however, the candle was extinguished and the nurse went down to her dinner, grateful for Petan's presence in case of Margot's need.

Petan had refrained from worrying Sylvia by mentioning the peregrinations of the turtle or her suspicions regarding its curious footgear and the similarity of its odor with that of the window pane, but she had docketed it with Sylvia's information regarding the latter's memory of that interview in the café. She now intended to institute researches on her own account, and thereupon seated herself by the nursery fire to wait till Margot got to sleep, when she would inves-

tigate the Duke's room. Even if found there, Margot's needs were ample excuse, and as everyone was either dining or serving below, she had a full hour at her disposal.

But Margot had no intention of going to sleep. She found that novel figure by the fire interesting. It might be cajoled into all manner of unaccustomed delights. She stood up in her crib and emitted an engaging gurgle of laughter. Petan looked up. Margot beckoned. Petan hesitated, and was lost.

"Take me," said Margot. She put one dimpled leg over the crib's rail and held out her arms. Petan lifted her out and carried her to the fire.

"Now we won't ever go to bed," Margot said. "Nurse is always busy about her meals when I want to sit up, and *mon père*, even he tonight was busy."

"What was thy father busy about?" asked Petan.

"I don't know, for he closed the door. But I peeped through the keyhole, thinking he might be at his prayers, but he was not. I found out that he is like me: he likes to take things to pieces."

"What did he take to pieces, my apple?" asked Petan.

"He took his scarfpin to pieces. He knew it was naughty, for did he not close the door? But I, like the *bon Dieu*, see all things. I saw him take the shiny stone out of his scarfpin with his nail file. Now don't you tell." She peered into Petan's face to be reassured.

"I tell? *Jamais de la vie!*" said Petan, now very wide awake herself. She must see that scarfpin. Had he used a diamond, she wondered, to cut that glass?

"And he did not come again to thee to kiss thee before he went to dinner?"

"No. He played in there, without inviting me. And it was a long time, for the servant came to tell him dinner was ready.

Petan lifted her sweet burden and carried it to the crib. Two arms clung to her neck, pulling her face close. "*Bonne nuit—je t'aime,*" called the sleepy voice as the door closed.

Petan found the Duke's room illuminated by the embers of a fire. Margot, as was her habit, sang herself to sleep,

and as Petan moved about the room that sweet, drowsy voice drowned the sound of her own movements. First she deliberately went through the pockets of the clothes he had worn that day, but found nothing more compromising than some unpaid bills; then through everything in the wardrobe, but discovered nothing. Then she examined a chest of drawers and a trunk, both of which were open, and looked on the dressing table, where were ranged gold-topped brushes and bottles, each surmounted by a ducal coronet.

On either side of the dressing table were three little drawers, and these Petan also investigated. The first two proved uninteresting, but the third caused her to draw a quick breath. Beneath some handkerchiefs lay an innocent-looking scarfpin. She had seen it repeatedly in the Duke's neckties, but not as it now was. Then it had held in gold claws a diamond of considerable size. These claws were now empty, and two were bent back as though forced outward to liberate the diamond.

Petan stood looking at it, turning it to and fro, then quickly ran her hand beneath the handkerchiefs, searching in the corners. Far back, under the white paper with which the drawer was neatly lined, she felt a small object, and deftly scraping up the paper, brought forth a diamond. She took it and the pin to the fire and fitted the stone between the claws. It fell into place easily, and Petan clicked her tongue against her teeth with a significant sound. Diamonds are used by every intelligent craftsman for cutting glass, as Petan knew. She recalled the round smear in the center of the window pane, and its similarity in touch and odor to the putty on the turtle's paw as it toddled from the Duke's room. A ball of putty adhering to the center of a pane of glass made an admirable handle by which to remove it after having been cut out.

"Oh, noble Duke!" breathed Petan, as she replaced both diamond and pin. Then she again looked about the room and espied in a distant corner a satchel, respectable and sober in form and color, pasted over with labels of first class Con-

tinental hotels. Everything else in the room had been left unlocked as though crying to be investigated. Would this also prove to be so?

Petan knelt before it. No, this was locked. Petan shook and wrenched it, but was unable to get it open. She was convinced that Mrs. Bradish's pearls lay concealed therein. Sylvia had reported Vaurigard's hope that the necklace would be recovered. Why had the Duke "borrowed" them? To get Vaurigard to the chateau? If so, why?

Petan returned to her room and sat down on the edge of her bed. She was now convinced that serious matters were afoot, and that she alone, single-handed, must frustrate some intended crime. Without doubt the Duke and Vaurigard were confederates, and De Reizet the intended victim. Yet were she to go to the latter with her suspicions of a turtle and a scarfpin as evidence against his own cousin, with whom he was on affectionate terms, how improbable was his belief! She was also aware of the stringency of French law concerning accusation without proof. Circumstantial evidence counted for little, and to insinuate dishonesty, even against a thieving servant, was more liable to land the accuser in prison than the thief.

Petan looked at her watch. It was after nine, and dinner must be over. She opened her door and crept down the passage to where the gallery opened upon the great double staircase leading to the main hall. This was empty, but through portières she glimpsed the Vicomte and his guests in the great *salon*. Mrs. Francis-Bray, Sylvia, the Vicomte and the Duke were playing bridge in the center of the room, all seemingly absorbed in the game. By the fire sat Mrs. Bradish talking to De Reizet. Both, to her astonishment, appeared to be on the friendliest terms, and Mrs. Francis-Bray glanced at them now and then with an enigmatical smile. At a desk nearby Vaurigard was busy writing. They all looked extremely peaceful and respectable, and for a moment Petan saw herself in an absurd light, leaning there in her wrapper, apparently the sole conspirator in the house.

Over the fireplace was a mirror which Vaurigard faced. He glanced toward this from time to time, and Petan noticed that it was not the girl's charming face and figure which drew his eyes, but the Duke, and once she saw their glances meet in a long look of understanding. Petan shivered and drew back as though those four eyes could reach even her thoughts.

Two hours later, when the ladies ascended, they found Petan at her door as they went by, her head done up in a towel and every sign of suffering on her drawn face. She, with contrite apologies, admitted her total inability to assist them, but when Sylvia offered to nurse her, closed her door on the girl's affectionate solicitations. As soon as the ladies had disappeared, Petan's head was unswathed and her door reopened, just the tiniest crack. She then sat down on the floor, her eye to that crack, and waited. The Duke's room was at her right, Margot's between, Vaurigard's on her left, farther down the corridor; and De Reizet's was in the other wing.

Petan heard the Duke stirring about in his room. She longed to step round to his window by the balcony, but decided it to be unwise, fearing that he might leave his room before she could return. Finally all was still, and profound darkness enveloped the vast building.

Presently she left her room, and without a light crept along the passage to Vaurigard's door and listened. All was still there. Then she went on to De Reizet's door. She must see if it was locked, for feeling himself among friends, he might have been careless. It seemed an interminable journey, but at last she reached it, and with infinite caution turned the handle. Yes, it was securely fastened, and she turned away with a breath of relief.

But she was now in haste to get back to watch her quarry. It must now be after midnight, and if anything was to be done it would be done before dawn, for Vaurigard had said he would return to Paris that morning. Petan reached her room in safety and again took up her watch in the darkness. Twice, as the hours dragged by, she heard a clock

strike far away across the park. Then suddenly came a faint click as of an opening door, so muffled as to be almost inaudible. Petan's blood froze. With her eye to the crack of her door she waited.

Yes, between her and the pale light from the window opposite a shadow passed and vanished, so noiselessly and quickly as to have mocked even her vigilance. In an instant she was erect and the door open. She looked out. There was nothing in the passage, but even as she was about to turn she saw a shadow spring up against the wall at the farther end and run along toward the staircase. Whoever it was had turned the corner of the corridor and was on the gallery going toward the stairs. Petan, like another shadow, started in pursuit, and was half-way down the hall when she saw a second shadow there, before her, moving along the wall. Petan crouched back against the oak wainscot and listened. Not a sound came as the two shadows melted into one and disappeared.

For a moment she held her breath, then sped swiftly along and peered over the railing of the gallery to the hall below, as a soft thud broke the silence. It was the closing of a little door below the stairs, which swung on a spring and was padded with felt to deaden sound, and led from the hall to a long passage between the main house and the library beyond the private chapel. Petan thought quickly. She could not follow, for that would mean discovery. Then she remembered the rear staircase used by servants, which led more directly to that distant room. Had she time?

She fled along back the way she had come and on down the winding stairs on noiseless feet, hardly conscious of darkness. It was a race as to who should reach the library first. Hers was the shorter route, and at last, when she reached a wide closed door and listened, no sound came from within. Softly and quickly she turned the handle and stepped inside. Beside her was a large screen with palms in its angles facing the room. Through low windows at one end a faint light came from the starlit night outside, disclosing the rich furnishings

of the library. In the center, placed diagonally, was a long table, and at either end a high-backed oak settee. Back of the one nearest to Petan there was a space of four or five feet. Opposite was the door by which they must enter.

A moment or two passed while Petan took her bearings through the sections of her screen. She realized that no sound could be heard from that room in the main house, and with that knowledge came the sense of her own perilous position. If they discovered her, her life would probably not be worth a fifty-centime piece.

Her thoughts were interrupted by a streak of light under the door opposite. It slowly spread as the door opened and the Duke, still in evening dress, appeared on the threshold, a candle in one hand, and in the other a small bundle tied up in a black silk kerchief. He entered, paused and peered about the room, and then crossed to the center table, put down the candle and the bundle and seated himself on the settee farthest from Petan, facing her. In an instant Vaurigard entered also, carrying in one hand a small packet tied with pink tape and sealed with the arms of France. Petan shuddered. How had he obtained it, and when? Where was De Reizet? He would never have parted from it alive.

Vaurigard also paused, listening. It reminded Petan of an animal scenting danger. But, apparently satisfied, he crossed the room and sat down on the settee with his back to Petan, facing the Duke. The watcher could now see only his head above the back of the seat. But no, she saw something else; between the seat and the back there were six inches of space, through which she saw a portion of his dinner coat and also the blue packet, which he had placed on the seat beside him.

The Duke was the first to speak. "Well," he said in a low voice, "you got the packet? An unpleasant piece of business. I hope he isn't hurt."

"Not a bit. It was simple enough. I syringed chloroform through his keyhole near his bed, opened his door with a

skeleton key and neatly extracted it from under his pillow. He'll sleep soundly and wake up with a headache, that's all."

The Duke moved restlessly. "Poor beggar! You say that's all! It spells ruin for him; but, on the other hand, it would have been ruin for me. But I don't relish seeing him at luncheon. When Germany shows her hand, who will believe he didn't sell it to her government?" (Petan, like a part of the shadows, moved, crouched, and like a cat, moved a few inches out from the sheltering screen toward the high back of the settee and that packet but a few feet away.) "But now to business. Here are the pearls for you to return to Madame Bradish in any way you choose. She will load you with praise and—cash, and spread the fame of your prowess abroad."

The Duke pushed the little black bundle away from him along the polished surface of the table. Vaurigard rose and moved round the side of the table toward it. As he did so, Petan moved also, every muscle under control, and gained another inch.

"Thanks," said Vaurigard. "You followed my directions admirably. You are a loss to my profession." He took the bundle, and still facing the Duke stepped backward and placed the pearls beside the packet. Petan heard a match struck, and as a tiny light flared, she scented a cigarette.

"Come," said the Duke, "we must get to bed. Give me the packet, for every moment is a risk."

Petan here gained another step.

Vaurigard leaned against the side of the table. Petan from where she crouched could see his feet crossed below the table, his hand outstretched.

"Don't let us be in a hurry," he said in a leisurely voice. "We're as safe from trouble as though we were peacefully in our coffins. I take a certain pleasure in the situation after all these months of baffling annoyances. The flood in Paris was a streak of luck. Also we have business details to arrange. This is the first chance we've had to exchange confidences since I came."

Petan was now close to the settee.

"What is there to discuss?" said the Duke impatiently. "All is understood. As soon as I'm paid by Germany, you shall have your tenth as I promised you." (Petan's hand closed on the packet—raised it and carried it to her breast.) "I gave you my word and I'll keep it."

Vaurigard knocked the ashes from his cigarette. "H'm—a tenth. Germany will pay well. You will be a rich man." (Petan's hand again went out, lifted the little black bundle, drew it into the darkness through the aperture.) "Riches are power—security—respectability; all admirable. To think that all that is in an envelope tied with pink tape! Life is droll."

The Duke leaned forward across the table, struck by something odd in the other's voice. "This is hardly the time for philosophizing," he said sharply. "Come, give me the packet. As I said before, I will keep my word."

Petan had now almost reached the screen. Sweat dripped from her forehead.

Vaurigard stepped backward. "You keep your word," he said quietly. "Keep it, by all means. As for me, I'll keep the packet and madame's beautiful pearls."

Could Petan have seen, she would have seen the Duke's face slowly pale as his eyes met Vaurigard's. For a moment not one of the three in that silent room moved. Then the Duke said in an even voice: "My friend, that is a poor joke, and I am not in the mood for pleasant-ries."

Vaurigard smiled. "It has been a joke till now," he said, "but now it is business. My dear Duke, did you really have such faith in my amiability as to suppose that I would accept a tenth when I could keep the whole? Why, in the name of common sense, should I?"

Petan gained a few inches more as she heard a sudden snarl and the Duke sprang, then Vaurigard's voice, tranquil, measured: "There, sit down and keep quiet. Your muscles are too soft to quarrel with mine."

"I'll kill you—I'll prosecute you—"

Petan had reached the screen as Vaurigard put out his hand behind him and

felt along the seat where he had placed his booty. "Oh, no, you won't," he said. "You can't say a word without ruining yourself."

Petan saw that searching hand and noiselessly fled as she heard the Duke's voice, strangled with anger. "And you'd make of me a common thief! I only borrowed those pearls. I'll give you half—a third—"

Petan was now speeding as swiftly as she dared down the passage. Any moment death might take up the chase and drag her back. She clutched the two bundles to her breast where her heart beat to suffocation as she flew along in the darkness. The way seemed long. Always she saw that sinewy hand stealing along that empty seat. At what instant would he turn and find it empty? Instinct and fear guiding her, she sped noiselessly through tortuous passages where shadows sprang to meet her, and at last reached the foot of the stairs. Clinging to the rail, she groped her way upward, the blood pounding in her ears. Suddenly she heard far down the passage soft padding of running feet. She glimpsed the topmost stair, gained it, and then, controlling by an immense effort the almost overwhelming impulse to run, held her muscles in check and softly, noiselessly, even slowly, went on down the corridor to her door. As she soundlessly turned the handle, the padding step neared the top of the stairs. Another breathless second and she was within, and the latch in its socket—safe!

Petan leaned against the closed door, listening. He must be there, only a few yards away, looking down that empty corridor, wondering whether that eaves-dropper had indeed come that way and who it was. She dared not move. Whichever of the twain was there, he must never know that the one he sought was Petan. Then suddenly she heard the steps pass her door. They did not pause, and she sighed with relief. A moment passed, and then she heard the steps steal by again, and the muffled sound of the Duke's door opening—closing. It had, then, been he. What were his thoughts there in that room beyond?

Petan dragged herself weakly to her

bed and lay down. There, against the bone buttons of her shabby wrapper, rising and falling with her panting breath, lay Sylvia's happiness, a man's honor and perhaps the future of France. Her trembling fingers touched the packet lovingly as her pulses calmed and her thoughts became ordered.

The ticking of her watch recalled her to the necessity of deciding the next course of action. What must be done now? Not yet was the hour come for self-congratulation and repose. The packet and pearls must be restored. But how? What was the wisest course to pursue? What was to be done might have far-reaching results, for other interests than personal ones were involved. Two nations' welfare hung in the balance. War, with its untold horrors, might spring from a hasty decision. Poor Petan sighed and trembled.

Then human nature asserted its ignoble prerogative. Revenge was the first thing to consider and enjoy. She recalled that cold, smiling face near the flickering candle as the Duke revealed his crime. Oh, to see that face cringe and blanch with fear! And she, Petan, had the power. She lay there in the darkness luxuriating in the novelty of the sensation.

Suddenly Petan caught her breath. What had she heard? She listened. Yes, an agonized sound smote the silence as though wrung from depths long buried. It came from Margot's room, so faint and muffled as hardly to be heard. Petan sat up. Was he there, by the child's bed? With her mind's eye she saw him, bowed above the child, broken, undone. Margot was there, asleep, innocent and helpless, ignorant of the calamity about to overtake her father, her sole protector in a selfish world. Margot—she had forgotten Margot.

She recalled those clinging arms, the touch of those guileless lips. Again that voice called to her from the depths of her woman's consciousness. Again she heard that sleepy voice call: "*Je t'aime.*" No, she could do nothing to destroy that child's happiness.

But justice—she must look at the question from all sides. De Reizet and

Sylvia loved one another—had done so since that memorable night when the rose had been bestowed through the fence. Tomorrow De Reizet would deliver the packet and reap fame, honor and riches. The Duke as his cousin would be a factor in Sylvia's future. What disgraced him would reflect on Sylvia, therefore scandal must be avoided as long as no harm had accrued. And, after all, would the Duke not be punished? Petan might yet taste the sweets of revenge without hurting a hair of Margot's head.

The Duke knew that someone had been in that room, that someone had learned from his own lips his guilt and intended treason. Someone knew that he had intended to ruin his cousin to save himself, and that he had robbed a woman, his friend, to accomplish his end. But he never would know who that "someone" had been. There lay the subtle sting of a frightful terror, an endless shame. Over Petrinac's head would hang an invisible sword. Never again could he enjoy a moment's peace or security. His very soul would shrivel with the passing years. As he looked at De Reizet, the Vicomte, Mrs. Francis-Bray, his fear would go beyond them in an ever widening circle of suspicion. He would never know who knew, or who did not know, as he walked with a forced smile through life on the edge of an invisible abyss. With the knowledge that somewhere, someone knew him for what he was, would come doubt of the sincerity of friendship from any man. Behind smiles he would suspect contempt; a careless greeting or averted glance would spell to him hatred. He would never know at what moment ruin and disgrace or even prison doors might claim him. Petan smiled grimly in the darkness, for revenge was hers, after all, and it was sweet.

As for De Reizet—should she tell him? What good would that do? He was now safe. To know his cousin as a traitor and a criminal was to place him under the ban of an obligation to law and justice. On the one hand, he would have to denounce his own relative and thus disgrace his own name, or cheat justice

and be an accessory to crime. No, De Reizet must not know.

Sylvia also must never know. As De Reizet's wife she must live in ignorance of how close to them dwelt shame and sin. Petan sighed while a tear ran down her sallow cheek. Self-abnegation proved as arduous as bearding villains, but she bravely fought temptation and faced the future where she would continue to play the role of a discreet person. No glory would ever be hers, no gratitude or appreciation. Her days would be filled with commonplace duties, while she continued to live on the edge of others' lives, nibbling at crumbs which fell from their rich table. She would continue to be used and useful, treated kindly, and as old age crept upon her, kindly tolerated. And only God would ever know.

Petan rose softly. Through the windows crept the chill which heralds the day's eternal resurrection. The room was cold and she shivered. She found the remnant of her coffee and drank it to the dregs. There was work still to be done.

The chateau was wrapped in silence as Petan cautiously opened her door and went out into the corridor. Mrs. Bradish slept soundly; but with a thought to the Duke, Petan noiselessly turned the door handle. The room was dim, but Petan discerned the dressing table by the still unmended window, and placed the pearls, denuded of their wrapping, where their owner had last seen them. Then, with a longing glance at the room beyond, she again found herself in the corridor. Before the Duke's door she paused, and neatly folding the black kerchief, placed it on the floor by his threshold. Then she went on down the corridor. When she neared Vaurigard's room she paused. A bar of light lay across the floor. His door was open, and Petan drew back against the wall, listening. But silence lay about her, and she went softly on and looked in. The room was empty. The bird had flown.

She reached the west wing and De Reizet's door. Remembering how a skeleton key had unlocked it, she gently turned the handle and entered. A sickening odor greeted her nostrils. She

crossed to the bed and leaned above him. That fine head she had once seen beneath pink tissue paper roses in a restaurant long ago now lay high on the pillows, but turned to one side with unnatural lassitude. She listened. His breath came and went slowly, wearily.

Petan slid the packet beneath his pillow, but he did not stir. "May the good God bless thee!" she breathed.

Then she went to the window and flung it wide, drawing in deep breaths of pure air. With another glance at the quiet sleeper, she went out and closed the door.

XI

THE day following that night of adventure the sun rose in a cloudless sky, bathing the drowned world with a radiance which reflected itself within the chateau.

Mrs. Bradish on awaking had discovered her pearls, and while for a moment doubting the evidences of her senses, had, after touching them, accepted them as realities, and called the glad news to Sylvia. Petan, too, was bidden to share their joy, and wrote an ecstatic note to Monsieur Vaurigard at Mrs. Bradish's dictation, which the latter directed should be delivered with that gentleman's coffee by Petan in person. Mrs. Bradish also called for her cheque book, and while filling it in with three figures kept up a running fire of praise. "What genius—and what modesty," she cried, "to thus avoid presenting them in person!" Her own modesty, however, winced at the thought that he must have seen her pompadour on its accustomed candlestick when he placed the recovered necklace on her dressing table.

Petan was also called upon to carry the glad news to the other inmates of the chateau, and her sense of humor supported her through that trying experience. When she knocked at the Duke's door, that gentleman himself opened it. Petan cast one lightning glance at his devastated face from which the last remnant of youth had fled, then dropped her eyes in modest consciousness of his informal attire.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur le Duc,*" said she.

"*Bon jour,*" replied he, plainly at a loss for the reason of this matutinal visit.

"Monsieur will pardon my intrusion," said Petan, "when he learns that Madame Bradish sent me to inform monsieur that during the night her pearl necklace was restored to her. Madame could not wait longer before imparting this knowledge, knowing how rejoiced monsieur would be. Madame also gave me this note to deliver to Monsieur Vaurigard, but as we find that he has, with wonderful modesty, already returned to Paris, may I take the liberty of requesting that it be forwarded? Madame and mademoiselle beg to thank Monsieur le Duc for having obtained his distinguished services."

The Duke drew his abbreviated robe about him as though to hide a wound. "Present my compliments," he replied in a colorless voice, "to the ladies, and tell them that of course I also rejoice. Monsieur Vaurigard is in truth a surprising man, and I shall have the satisfaction of telling him my opinion of his remarkable performance at the earliest opportunity." The Duke bowed, and Petan courtesied and withdrew.

Her other visits to the inmates of the chateau were more agreeable but less interesting. All echoed Mrs. Bradish's pleasure and gratitude and her praises of that marvelous genius who recovered pearl necklaces from the unknown and then vanished to avoid thanks.

Petan found De Reizet's room also empty, but espied him mounting a big bay mare before the terrace below and watched him ride away in the direction of the neighboring chateau where the Minister of War awaited his coming. Petan decided that it was now high time matters between the lovers were brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Without doubt, the Duke would now press his suit as his only remaining salvation, and Petan had no intention of allowing circumstances to favor him. As she labored under the delusion that all was understood between the lovers, only madame's consent remained to be gained. French etiquette demanded that before Sylvia

could be won her mother's sanction must be had. That Petan believed Sylvia was already won mattered nothing as regarded formalities. The affair must be made to appear regular, and De Reizet must ostensibly woo all over again publicly after having gained Mrs. Bradish's consent to do so.

With this end in view, Petan, free to follow her own bent, followed it down the avenue by which De Reizet would return. Word had come from Paris that the waters were receding. Therefore the ladies were anxious to get back to town at the earliest moment, and it had been arranged that the Vicomte was to return to Paris with his guests directly after luncheon. Petan wanted matters settled before the Duke could reestablish his intimacy in Paris, where De Reizet was at a disadvantage.

Jehan had received a letter from Jack saying that he and his aunts were again domiciled in their own house, though their garden was still a marsh. Therefore it was certain that a few hours would see the lovers separated, and thus Petan had reason to accelerate Cupid. She could not know that De Reizet was at that moment accelerating the bay mare toward that very goal as rapidly as muddy roads permitted. He had delivered his packet, and the French army was now assured of clothing; blankets and tents lighter, cheaper, warmer and more durable than those of any army in the world, while his own future was no longer shadowed by sordid economies. Therefore the world that sunshiny morning seemed to him very attractive, and he sang to himself from a light heart as he rode home.

Suddenly he saw Petan under the trees beside the road. As he drew up his horse beside her and bared his head in greeting, he noticed that her face looked somewhat pale and tired.

"You are out early—too early to have heard the glad news," said she. "Madame's necklace is found, and the wonderful Monsieur Vaurigard has gone to Paris."

De Reizet looked the surprise and delight he felt. "That is indeed good news," he said. "He is truly a mar-

vel; we should all be grateful to him."

Petan's eyes for a moment held a strange expression.

"As you say," she replied, "we must all be grateful. But why so early, monsieur?"

De Reizet looked up at the sky. "Is it early?" he said. "I only know that it is day, and that the night is ended."

"Did you also know, monsieur, that the ladies return to Paris directly after luncheon?"

De Reizet came down from the clouds. "Indeed! Then I go also," he replied promptly.

"Paris is not the place for the intimacy one enjoys here," said Petan significantly. "I fear that we shall see monsieur but little there."

"That depends," said he, smiling down into Petan's anxious eyes. "Such matters may be controlled, and I mean to control them."

"But Madame Bradish—"

"A charming woman. We understand each other now better than I should ever have hoped possible."

"And now," said Petan, after a moment's silence, "nothing stands in the way of my angel having her heart's desire."

De Reizet looked surprised. "You mean a garden party on my lawn?"

"Not at all, though that also doubtless will be arranged. I mean that since she gave monsieur that rose through the fence, she has cherished monsieur in her heart and—" Petan made a significant gesture.

De Reizet looked more puzzled. "Fence?" queried he at a loss.

Petan, now launched on the stream of sentiment, shook her finger at him archly. "Pretend not," she said; "I know all. Mademoiselle has confided all to me. For months have I carried her secret in my bosom. Ah, the delicacy with which she adores monsieur! If she failed to demonstrate it, blame me, not mademoiselle, for it was I who forbade her to pat monsieur's curls through the fence and—"

"You say mademoiselle has loved me—how long?" asked De Reizet in a strange voice.

"The calendar can give you the date better than I; but what are such prosaic matters as compared to the fact? I only speak thus, monsieur, because time, like youth, is fleeting, and happiness—"

De Reizet swung himself down from his horse.

"Madame, your conversation, as always, interests me," he said. "Permit me to walk along with you. As you were about to say, happiness must not be allowed to escape; it must be grasped. In this case happiness for me is represented by mademoiselle; is it not so?"

"With her it is represented by monsieur."

"A remarkable coincidence."

"Not remarkable, monsieur, considering the skill and charm with which monsieur has conducted the affair. Truly, after what mademoiselle told me, no maid could have resisted."

"You flatter me, madame," said De Reizet gravely. "I beg you to tell me all, for this conversation touches me profoundly."

Petan, with her cautious brain telling her to be discreet and tell nothing, opened her mouth and told everything. "Mademoiselle spoke of monsieur's pure and loving heart. She admired monsieur's skill at football and his manner of saying his prayers beside her in the Madeleine. She deplored that a fence twelve feet high and a parent's prejudices divided her from monsieur, and regretted her inability not to be a sister to him."

"H'm!" said De Reizet. "A sister! Within this hour I shall suggest to her a better relationship than that. That is American, not French. And what else did mademoiselle say?"

"Mademoiselle told of charming hours spent in monsieur's society at Luna Park, and said that she preferred riding on top of an omnibus with him to dining at the home of the Duc de Petrinac."

De Reizet pulled at his mustache meditatively. "You do indeed surprise me. Truly, I had no idea how deeply I was loved. By the way, have you ever chanced to hear mademoiselle mention my brother Jack?"

Petan looked puzzled. "No, never

have I heard the name. I doubt if mademoiselle has the pleasure of his acquaintance."

De Reizet climbed back into the saddle. "One never knows," said he. "I fancy they may have met. I will, in any case, suggest to mademoiselle that she be a sister to him, rather than to me."

De Reizet rode onward firm in the intention of seeing Mrs. Bradish for the necessary formality of demanding her daughter's hand in marriage before luncheon. If the daughter could be interviewed also, so much the better. He saw by his watch that it was already after eleven. He hastened his pace and soon descended before the terrace. But piled thereon were trunks, and the object of his quest was there also, with the Duke. As De Reizet approached he could not help but hear a few words. "I must apologize for my daughter's impulsiveness," Mrs. Bradish was saying. "Forgive her youth, and try again."

The Duke shrugged his shoulders despairingly. "Mademoiselle seemed to have made up her mind."

"Perhaps, but her heart may change it."

De Reizet passed on into the house. Evidently it was not a propitious moment for complicating matrimonial complexities, but he could have shouted for joy. Sylvia evidently had turned down his cousin in no undecided manner.

The rest of the time before their departure all was confusion and Mrs. Bradish as elusive as a flea. Sylvia also evaded him, though at luncheon, when he caught her eyes, an adorable, timid self-consciousness seemed to emanate from them as though appealing for consideration. Later, when De Reizet tucked Mrs. Bradish snugly into the omnibus, as though such things as land, a fence and trespassing rabbits had never caused bitterness, Sylvia openly smiled and her dimple seemed to say, "Peace is declared."

The party shared the same compartment, but the Duke and the Vicomte soon departed to the smoker, leaving the ladies to novels and gossip. Mrs. Francis-Bray sat on one side of De Reizet, and he, desperate and determined to

bring matters to a crisis before Paris reclaimed them, spoke frankly to that kind friend.

"Do you think I have a chance with Madame Bradish?" he asked in a low voice, which the roar of the train covered.

"Certainly you have," she replied. "Her social ambitions are only a case of misdirected affections; but be daring, not humble. Tell her that, while your haughty relatives may object to the marriage, you love Sylvia too deeply to allow worldly considerations to stand in the way. Demand—not ask; and assure her that the French Republic is on its last legs. That will fetch her, for a court is even more desirable in her eyes than your garden."

De Reizet laughed. "She'll be sure to speak of that fence."

"Tell her it will be torn down, and ask her advice regarding replanting your garden with a view to lawn parties."

"I really like her," said De Reizet, "because she loves her daughter to distraction. We have that in common, and also she is an extremely intelligent woman. She knows human nature and plays on its weaknesses."

"Play on hers, my friend," said Mrs. Francis-Bray, "and may good luck attend you. Now think it out, for I'm going to sleep."

De Reizet, left to his own devices, glanced about. Sylvia was deep in a novel between her mother and the window, opposite Mrs. Francis-Bray, and as far removed from him as though on Mars. Petan was at the other end next to the corridor, apparently lost in thought, but really very wide awake. So when De Reizet passed her to leave the compartment, with a significant motion of his head, she quietly rose and followed him out of sight of those within.

The train hurtled along through half-submerged fields, and De Reizet guided her swaying steps to the further end till they reached the square space near the platform. He peered round the corner and saw they were unsuspected. "Madame," he said, "has proved as difficult to interview as royalty. I cannot in honor proceed with mademoiselle until I

have succeeded with her mother, yet such is my impatience that if you cannot arrange for madame to come out here that I may speak I shall shout my intentions to her in that compartment before them all. Now I implore you to use your incomparable ingenuity to get madame to come out here. How can it be done?"

Petan steadied herself against the paneled wall and thought. "I have it," she said at last. "Madame is not yet asleep, I think. She is sensitive as to the set of her pompadour. I will tell her it is on one side, and that it betrays itself; she will then go to the dressing room, and you may meet her as though returning from the smoker. The rest I leave to your tongue, your ardent heart and madame's pleasure."

Petan wrung his hand and departed, leaving De Reizet with one eye peeping round the corner on the lookout for the proper moment to appear.

Petan, having regained her seat, was chagrined to find the object of their solicitude sound asleep. To add to her exasperation, the pompadour was in truth awry. Petan, aware of the impatient lover waiting in the corridor, was in despair, till the idea dawned that Sylvia might console him. Being under the erroneous impression that all was understood between them, Petan saw no reason why they should be denied a pleasant half-hour. So she leaned forward and touched Sylvia's knee. The girl turned.

"You are stiff sitting there so long, *chérie*," said Petan. "Come out in the corridor for a little promenade."

Sylvia, nothing loath, followed the wily one, and De Reizet from his hiding place was regaled by the sight of their two backs swaying down the passage away from him. But, though every road may have a turning, railway corridors have none, and soon they came toward him, arm in arm. As they neared his hiding place, he stepped boldly forth and came toward them, relying on Petan's imagination.

"Ah, monsieur," she said as they met, "the cigar is finished? What a privilege it is that man is able at will to make of himself a chimney!"

De Reizet smiled. "We know, madame, you and I, that sometimes there is but little fire where there is much smoke."

Petan ignored the dark insinuation. "Love lights many fires," said she—"in palaces as well as garrets. Now in your case, my precious birds, it burned through a fence twelve feet high; is it not so?"

This amiable remark fell like a bomb among the trio. De Reizet understood that it originated in Petan's mistake as to the identity of him who had kept that tryst by the fence, but Sylvia recognized only the truth of the bare fact thus brutally declared. She turned an amazed and stricken face to her who had thus betrayed her. "Petan!" she gasped. "How dare you?"

De Reizet realized the danger of so critical a situation and hastened to speak. "Madame Petan confuses facts a little," he said, "but—"

"I confuse nothing," said Petan indignantly. "Why, *chérie*, you need not fear. Monsieur has, like you, confided to me his love as you did yours for him. Among us three all is at last free and open."

Sylvia looked wonderingly at her companion. "My poor Petan," she said gently, "you are ill. Monsieur de Reizet, you will forget this absurd talk—"

But Petan considered their behavior ridiculous. "Ill—I? Never! But my character abhors subtleties. Considering, mademoiselle, that for three months I have heard monsieur's protestations of love repeated by you and heard his adoring missives read aloud, this sudden reserve and pretense wounds me profoundly and is beyond my understanding."

Petan turned her back on the abashed twain and departed down the corridor. Of course Sylvia should have hurried after her to explain and console, but how could she when De Reizet held her fast by one hand and barred her way with six feet of solid bone and muscle?

"Mademoiselle—" he stammered. "No, I beg of you, don't run away. Don't be angry, I implore."

Sylvia feebly tried to regain her imprisoned hand. "She—she—meant Jack," she said with averted face.

"Of course, but what's the difference? It's all in the family, isn't it? Oh, what can I say? Mademoiselle, it is contrary to my code to tell you how I love you until I have gained your mother's consent—and note that I do not say it. Petan, that pearl among women, has done it for me. All she said of me, you know is true. She said you loved me. Please—oh, my adored one—"

"It was Jack," said Sylvia.

"Admitted, but make believe it was I. When she told me how you prayed together—how dearly you loved me—I mean Jack—it sounded so heavenly sweet. Oh, mademoiselle—*chérie*—*Mon Dieu, comme je t'aime!*"

De Reizet's face was now close to Sylvia's as she stared out past its reflection at the flying trees and telegraph poles.

"You said that nothing would induce you to marry an American girl," she said.

De Reizet caught a shadowy glimpse of a dimple and caught his breath. "A wise man said it is only a fool who never changes his mind."

"You wished I'd go home and stay there."

"I do—to my home, to remain forever and forever."

"There is mother."

"She'll be mine. I never had one, and I'll make her love me."

"And the land."

"What's mine is yours."

"And the fence."

"It shall come down. Oh, my precious one—my beloved! I'm so unworthy, but bless me—take my heart—"

De Reizet gathered her into his arms. Sylvia felt his trembling lips on her closed eyes, her lips.

A stout gentleman appeared at the further end of the car, stared, whistled and vanished. Sylvia drew herself away, and the light in De Reizet's face was reflected in her eyes. "What will Jack say?"

"Here we are drawing into a station. We'll telegraph him."

"You'll have to explain to Petan."

"I'll explain nothing. She was correct in all she said, and shall never know that certain trifling details were wrong. And please to remember, my lovely one, that it was Petan, not I, who proposed. I remind you of that fact, that no one may claim that my behavior was open to criticism from a French point of view. I shall ask your mother's consent to-morrow, and then yours all over again. Here we are in the station. Let us fly."

Fly they did along the dingy platform, dodging peasants burdened with children and bundles, shouting trainmen and trucks piled with luggage. They had but five minutes to send so important a telegram, and the indifferent official awoke to exasperating interest in Sylvia. However, this message was hurriedly written and paid for, signed by Sylvia:

Your brother has changed his mind about marrying an American, for he is to marry you—

SYLVIA.

As De Reizet helped his fiancée to the train platform, she turned, consternation depicted on her countenance. "We forgot to tell him not to tell!" she cried.

"Never mind," he replied. "He couldn't have helped telling the aunts even if we had."

Two hours later the party straggled through the wicket at the Gare de Lyon and on into the great hall where customs officials inspect luggage. Suddenly Petan saw Jehan presenting a charming boy in Eton clothes and top hat to Mrs. Bradish and Sylvia. The latter acknowledged the introduction with dignified decorum, but Petan noticed that in a moment the twain were deep in animated conversation. Evidently the boy was the "brother," and not slow to appreciate a lovely young lady.

"You wretch!" Sylvia was saying

with laughing eyes. "How dared you tell them?"

"You didn't tell me not to," said Jack, whose fresh cheeks and eyes glowed with excitement. "They are out there in their carriage. They came all the way across Paris to welcome you. Do come! Hurry!"

Sylvia glanced hurriedly at her mother, absorbed in swearing her trunks contained neither tobacco nor liquors, and followed Jack through the entrance and along the outer pavement under the overhanging glass roof, to where a high swung, old-fashioned barouche awaited. Within, erect and elegant, sat the twins in fur-trimmed pelisses and antiquated bonnets from which hung long lace veils. Little strings were tied neatly beneath their chins, and their hands in two-buttoned lavender gloves were eagerly extended as the girl stood on the carriage step, while Jack executed a war dance of joy on the sidewalk.

"Oh, *chérie*," cried Aunt Cecile, "we came to welcome you, to express our delight, our—"

"Our joy," echoed Agathe, patting Sylvia's free hand. "Often have I thought that you and Jehan were made for each other."

"You must love me," cried Sylvia; "I'll be so good. We'll all have a perfectly beautiful time together."

"Thou art adorable," said Cecile.

"And we shall adore thee," said Agathe.

"You darlings!" cried Sylvia, putting up her face to be kissed. She felt their lips like rose leaves on her cheek, and suddenly found tears in her eyes.

"I loved her before any of you," boasted Jack, "and she me. Come on, Sylvia. The Duke is glaring about from the doorway. He'll have a shock when he learns the glad news. Come on home."



IF matches are made in Heaven, we can readily see why divorce is a burning question.

"IDOLS"

By Donal Hamilton Haines

BELTON, dramatic critic for the *Times*, stood forlornly beside his desk, shaking the snow from his shoulders and making frantic efforts to get the melting flakes from between his collar and his neck. The expression on his face indicated mingled discomfort and ill temper. Hawkes, the night editor, passed him and stopped to watch his struggles.

"If you were a married man," he suggested sagely from the airy height of a year's experience, "there would be a top button to your overcoat, and such disasters would not overwhelm you. Also," with a glance at Belton's soaking feet, "you would wear your rubbers and not be cut down by pneumonia in the flower of your youth."

"You go to blazes!" snapped Belton, still trying to disgorge melting snow.

Hawkes sat down on the corner of his desk to enjoy the torture.

"Bachelorhood," he rattled on, "is a curable disease. I took the cure when I could ill afford it. Now you get pay enough for two men; why don't you do it?"

"As I suggested," repeated Belton, "you might go to some warm place for a while."

Hawkes laughed. "How was the show?" he asked casually.

"Rotten," snapped Belton.

Left to himself, he lifted the cover from his rickety typewriter, pulled a frayed and tattered theater program from his pocket, slipped a thick pad of half a dozen sheets of copypaper into the typewriter and lighted his pipe. Then he stared fixedly at the wall in front of him. He had just told Hawkes that the play had been "rotten." Had

it really? It had been long—so long that he had missed the late supper he invariably took after a play; it had driven him out into the storm, which had soaked him—and it had not made him laugh. This last fact, in the midst of his gloomy feelings, impressed him unduly. Plays, he decided, should always make one laugh some time or other during the course of their action, no matter how tragically they might finally terminate.

He cut the heading from the program and pasted the cast of characters onto a sheet of paper, marked it with a figure "1" in an upper corner, and then marked the sheet in his machine "2," still considering what he should write. Under ordinary circumstances he would have said a few rather trite things about the play and let it pass. But circumstances were not usual; he was wet, uncomfortable and hungry and the play was the cause of it. If it had been short and to the point he would have had his supper; if it had made him laugh he could still smile at the recollection and so forget his discomforts. It had been one of those affairs which we have taken to calling "problem plays" on the apparent assumption that the plays of previous generations had no problems worth the solving. It had not been very heavy, but fairly convincing, rather true to life, well acted and well staged. Belton considered its flaws and merits as dispassionately as possible in view of the cold, clinging mess which had once been a collar that encircled his neck. At the end of five minutes of steady puffing at his pipe and staring at the wall in front of him, his critical thumb was turned down, not merely on the play he had just wit-

nessed, but on all plays of the type which were inclined to be long and which did not make one laugh, and he commenced to write.

Belton wrote well. His editors, the public and even the dramatic critic of the *Star* admitted this without hesitation. He wrote exactly what he thought and was swayed by no minor considerations. If a manager waxed wroth and withheld passes, Belton was not put out; he bought his own tickets and criticized as ruthlessly as the spirit moved him to do. He was ruthless now; also he wrote even better than usual. He made the play "Idols" the scapegoat of its class, and he attacked the class unhesitatingly, asking playwrights and public many questions as to the value of such things. When he had finished he piled up his "copy" with some satisfaction and handed it over to Hawkes. The latter ran through it quickly while Belton refilled his pipe.

"This is good stuff, Fred," he said admiringly. He had been at the same work once himself, and had forgotten no part of it save professional jealousy.

"I rather thought so myself," admitted Belton calmly.

"Rather rough in spots," Hawkes suggested. One does not mention the cutting of the highly paid men's "stuff" in the same manner in which one seals the fate of the stories brought in by the young reporters.

"Umph!" grunted Belton noncommittally. He was not paying much attention to Hawkes. He was eyeing the figure of a woman seated at a typewriter a short distance from the night editor's desk.

"What's Miss Black doing here at this time?" he demanded. "They haven't put her on night work, have they?"

Hawkes smiled. The rather paternal attitude which Belton always assumed toward Miss Black amused him intensely. It would have amused Belton, too, if it had not frightened him. He was, in truth, a good deal afraid of Miss Black. Several times he had caught himself thinking of her, and he never worked as well when she was in the office.

Once or twice he had taken her with him to the theater (the act the result of his discovery that she knew more about the drama than anybody on the staff except himself) and he was guiltily conscious of the intention to do so again. He was quite conscious now that Hawkes was smiling at him—and why.

"The very thing," Hawkes suggested meaningly.

Belton frowned and glared at him angrily.

"Might I repeat my mild question?" he demanded. "Have you put that girl on night work?"

Hawkes's smile broadened into a grin.

"No, most solicitous one," he answered gravely, "we have not."

Then Belton stalked out into the snow to get that late supper which he had missed. As soon as he had left the office, Miss Black skipped from her typewriter, and Hawkes, without a word, handed her what Belton had written.

Belton enjoyed his supper immensely. His collar was dry by this time, and he felt at peace with the world—for the most part. He knew that he had done a good piece of writing. But the thought of the manner in which Hawkes had smiled disturbed him; also he thought a great deal of Miss Black.

"It would and it wouldn't," he said aloud, so that the waiter came very near saying, "Beg pardon, sir!" "It would and it wouldn't. If only there were a sort of semi-matrimonial state that was perfectly proper! But think of all the things I'd lose!"

It was a comfort to know that he was stronger than his temptations. The terror he felt on occasions when he thought that his priceless singleness was endangered was not a pleasant thing to endure. He slipped a larger tip than usual under his plate and walked home feeling very sure of himself.

"And so," inquired Belton, with that mild gleam through his glasses which always meant a desire for unlimited discussion, "you didn't like what I had to say about 'Idols'?"

Miss Black slipped smoothly into the chair which the waiter held back for her,

and swept her skirts out of the way with an ease and grace which were not lost upon her companion. Within himself he took warning that he had best plunge at once into the depths of discussion and not use his eyes.

"No," she answered, "I did not."

This was accompanied by what seemed to Belton an unnecessarily direct stare from a very fine pair of black eyes. He took hasty refuge in intent contemplation of the menu card.

"And yet," she went on remorselessly, "I think it was the best thing you have written since I have been in the *Times* office."

Belton favored her with another bland glare through his spectacles. Internally he murmured, "She must *not* talk to me that way!"

"Did you really?" he asked

"Yes," she answered. "But I thought it hardly fair. There was more than the play in your mind when you wrote. What made you feel as you did?"

Belton unblushingly confessed of the wet collar and the supper which he had not eaten. She heard him out unsmilingly.

"And you think that was fair to the play?" she demanded.

"It's not that particular play," answered Belton. "It's all the plays of that type. Sometimes I wish that Ibsen and his like hadn't lived. If it weren't for them, perhaps every Tom, Dick and Harry wouldn't be trying to write the same sort of thing now. They're true enough to life—most of 'em. But I don't hold that an excuse. They don't really accomplish what they set out to do. You can't preach over the footlights; it isn't human. Some bulging-browed people will tell me that's bad psychology; I know better. One book does more good than a hundred plays. They create mild excitement, a good deal of comment, a great deal of morbid curiosity—if they're of the modern sort.

"Now this play the other night was nothing more than an attempt to dignify trifles. We're pandering slaves to what we call realism. It's all a pose—every bit of it. Realism—bah! We don't want

realism. We know that the stage is the stage all the time, don't we? Well, then, why not put plays upon it? There are all the tools—footlights and quick change scenery; why not use them? These modern playwrights are teaching our audiences new tricks. When the curtain goes up on a poor room with broken furniture and cracks in the plaster, they gasp and say: 'How wonderfully true to life!' Now why in the name of heaven shouldn't it be true to life if a reasonably good scene painter has the making of it; and what is there wonderful about it? And then when the actors say and do the things real people say and do—and never get much beyond saying those trite, ordinary things—your audience gasps again and goes home thinking that it's had a chance to peek at real art!

"It's seldom enough that we bump into clever and unusual people. There isn't time for such things in ordinary existence. Most of us would talk cleverly if we had time to think things out. I can be pretty epigrammatic myself with a typewriter and a pipe, but I can't with my tongue. Now why shouldn't we put ultra-clever people on the stage in the unreal situations which the play makes possible? Why not freshen up the realities by putting in a little tincture of unreality instead of making a parade of the commonplaces?"

He paused long enough to make those small dodges and eludings which one must practise even with the best of waiters when he is serving a rather pretentious meal, and then rattled on eagerly:

"That dishwashing scene in 'Idols,' for instance! It was very well acted, very cleverly staged. And all for what? To remind a lot of women in the audience of what they had left and what would be waiting for them when they got back! There's a tragedy in the fact that a lot of women have to do those things; I don't think it's dignified any by being put on the stage. People would rather forget it. They didn't come to see such things. They'd rather see women in the clothes that *they* can't afford to wear talking of the things that never come into their own lives.

"Now why do you suppose any man—

or woman; I believe it was a woman—wrote that play?"

The girl stared at him an instant very wide-eyed. "Did you ever think of writing a play, Mr. Belton?" she asked.

He shook his head quickly.

"Couldn't," he confessed, "and wouldn't. My vanity would never stand hearing other people tear it to pieces."

She leaned forward with sudden eagerness, which escaped Belton, now busy with the carving of a fowl which he had surprised the waiter by taking out of his hands.

"And don't you ever stop to think how the people whose plays *you* tear to pieces may feel?"

Belton considered this an instant, carving knife poised in the air.

"No," he said; "I can't afford to. I haven't any exalted ideas about the importance of my position. I don't think I'm a sort of dramatic surgeon sawing out the salvation of the stage with my tools. I didn't make myself a dramatic critic. Somebody else put me where I am, and I do what I can, that's all."

"But suppose," she insisted, holding out her plate for him to fill, "that what you said about 'Idols' cost someone a great deal of money, made the play a failure—wouldn't you be sorry?"

"In the abstract, yes," admitted Belton. "But, personally, I never consider my own position. I'm just one of the inevitable things that a play has to pass—like a rock in the entrance of a harbor. Everybody knows I'm there—and that I try to be fair-minded. A good pilot and a good ship won't come to grief on a charted rock. A good play won't fall to pieces through any work of mine, because I'll say it's a good play."

"But the other night," Miss Black reminded him, "it was a wet collar and a supper missed that decided you."

"My opinion," answered Belton, "was inevitable. It was fated that I should say what I had to say some time. The things which caused my speech were merely the instruments of providence."

"That doesn't save the play," she went on quickly. "That doesn't fill the empty seats that are increasing every

night, nor pay for the expenses of production nor—"

She stopped quickly, to find her companion staring at her intently.

"How do you know all these things?" he demanded sharply.

"Because I wrote 'Idols.'"

Belton put down his knife and fork and sat back in his chair. He did not grow red in the face nor even appear ill at ease. The element of tragedy was too deep for mere embarrassment. He only sat and stared fixedly at the girl opposite him, while she bit her under lip and tried to meet his gaze.

"You wrote it?" he repeated incredulously.

She nodded. There was a moment of terrible stillness during which every other consideration was blotted out of Belton's mind by the fear that the girl was going to weep. He looked wildly about him to see how many people there were in the room, and even estimated how long it would take to summon the waiter and get her into a cab. But Miss Black did not weep. Instead, she looked up from her plate and commenced to tell him the whole story of the play from the day of its conception to the moment when she had been back of the curtain, clenching her hands until the palms were cut by her nails, listening to the first sounds of approval from the house, while Belton sat patiently in his orchestra chair wondering whether the final curtain would give him time for his supper.

"And all along," she said finally, "I have thought about you and what you would write about my play. I always read your criticisms, because you say what you think, and you seem to know so well what is the right thing to say. I wanted to please you—and I failed. I don't blame you for writing what you did, only—well, it hurts to have failed."

"You've not failed," he said quickly. "My little screed won't do that to a play."

In reply she handed him a note. Belton looked first at the signature and scowled. Managers, he knew, were not apt to be either optimistic or tender in their choice of language. "That clever

devil Belton," he read, "has knocked thirty per cent off the box by that stuff of his. If we'd hooked him, the thing would go. As it is, we've got to do something quick. Every other critic has taken his cue from Belton."

He folded up the letter and handed it back to her.

"If you had only told me a month ago," he lamented, and then stopped. "Well," he finished, "I wouldn't have tacked all that other stuff onto what I had to say."

"I didn't want you to know beforehand," she said. "I didn't want you to know until it had become a success—and now it never will! Oh, I didn't mean to say all this—I don't want you to think I'm asking you to help me to do anything. I know you can't. I—"

This time Belton's worst fears were realized; the tears came. He was terrified, but yet managed to handle the difficulty creditably, and within a few minutes he sat on one side of a cab, glaring woodenly at the passing electric lights, while Katherine Black sobbed quietly at his side. He made no effort to speak until they had driven several blocks.

"The fat," he said slowly, "is in the fire. All that I can say is no possible comfort to you. I don't need to tell you that I would have written something else if I had known you wrote 'Idols' if it broke my professional conscience beyond hope of repair. More than that, you've opened my eyes. I've been an unfeeling brute about some things. I don't think I can ever write in exactly the same way again. Every time I want to tear something to pieces, I'll think of you or some struggling devil who's depending on his little work for life itself, and I'll try to be a bit more charitable. Why in thunder didn't you tell me?" he finished miserably.

At the door of her house she spoke for the first time during the drive.

"You don't think I'm a perfect baby—and a miserable coward into the bargain, do you?" she asked tearfully.

"I think," he answered, "that you're the finest little girl in the world!"

He had not intended to say exactly

this. Yet he would have said more but for the fact that Miss Black slipped quickly into the house. He walked back to the cab and stood staring at it without being in the least conscious of its existence.

"Will you ride, sir?" inquired the cabby politely.

Belton stared at him.

"Do I look," he demanded, "like a man who wants even the company of a broken-winded horse, a smelly vehicle and yourself?" He handed the man twice his fare. "You didn't wreck your chariot, and you got that drive over as quickly as possible. Take that and be happy," he said, and stalked away into the darkness.

"I always knew," he muttered as he strode along, "that I'd bring it upon myself in an unguarded moment, but I never thought it would come this way. I've spoiled everything. I've got to marry her; that's the one thing left. I've busted her play and probably ruined her life. She'll be turning on the gas in her room or something of that sort if I don't do the one thing that's left," concluded the cheerful egoist.

He considered miserably the things he must leave off—his blissfully irregular habits, his few clubs, his pipes and the happy privilege of rashly throwing cigarette stubbs into waste baskets, the chaotic disorder of his rooms—where everything was easily found because nothing was ever piled on anything else; they were strewn in one veneer of disorder over every stationary thing. He considered also the questionable things he would gain, and sighed at their contemplation. Yet he was conscious, underneath his dismay, of a warm, pleasant feeling every time he thought of the girl.

"I suppose," he comforted himself as he fumbled for his latchkey, "that it had to come some time—and it might have taken a whole lot more disagreeable form."

As the soldiers of one army do not make a practice of going in broad daylight with weapons in their hands into the camp of the enemy, so the staff of the *Times*, individually and collectively, left

untrodden those portals which gave into the *Star* offices. It was, therefore, an event of no small proportions when on the following morning the unmistakable figure of Belton, in his working clothes and behind the shining fortifications of his spectacles, appeared in the midst of the *Star* office and urbanely asked for Urkmann. Grinning reporters directed him, and he walked to where a big bearded German sat glowering at him over the top of a typewriter.

"Hello, Urkmann," greeted Belton. "Have a cigar." And he sat down on the edge of his desk.

Urkmann—who possessed a tremendous vocabulary, an unbreakable habit of writing English in sentences of Teutonic ponderousness, and the firm belief that no real dramas would ever be written by anyone save Sudermann and Heise—accepted the cigar and bit off the end before he answered.

"Vell," he said, "haf you been fired, or vat iss it?"

Belton wasted no words. He plunged straight at the heart of the matter.

"You saw what I wrote about 'Idols'?" he demanded.

The big German threw both hands above his head.

"*Ach, Himmel!*" he cried. "Did I see it! It iss no vunder dey haf fired you! Uf all der rot dat vas efer written! I was certain you hat lost vat liddle mind you bossessed."

Belton did not stop to argue the point, but told the whole story without sparing a detail. Urkmann's brusqueness vanished at once, and he nodded sympathetically. When Belton had finished he said quietly:

"I tink I see. You vant—"

"I want you to boost that play every bit your column will stand," explained Belton. "I guess you can do it without blistering your conscience. I guess it's good stuff according to your morbid German lights."

"Id iss a long vay from peing pad," Urkmann admitted placidly.

"All right; just go ahead and repeat that in print for all the traffic will stand," urged Belton, "and I'll rip into it and you for all there is in it. I'll call you

mild names and you'll call me milder ones—with more syllables in them; and we'll have no end of a good time between us, the populace will be vastly entertained and there won't be a man, woman or child that won't see 'Idols' at least twice during its run, and it'll go out on the road with a big run certain!"

Urkmann grinned broadly and held out his hand.

"Pelton," he said, "you are der vurst dramatig cridig in der United Stades, bud you haf a soul."

They shook hands silently, and Belton went down the stairs two at a time, not so much as pausing to taunt any of the hostiles about a "beat" which the *Times* had scored the morning before.

That same day the rival papers—in the persons of their dramatic critics—locked horns over the play and simultaneously announced the real name of its author. The city took notice, and the empty seats vanished. For a week Belton and Urkmann plied their heaviest artillery, and "Idols" became the subject of the moment, while crowds of anxious people stewed and elbowed to get at the window of the box office.

Nevertheless, Belton was not wholly satisfied that he had done all that he should. He felt that the thing he had decided upon following the miserable ride in the cab was nothing less than his duty. At least he so interpreted his unshaken decision to go ahead with it. Naturally he chose the same table at the same restaurant for the scene, and he asked the question earnestly—taking his glasses off and holding them stiffly in his hand while he spoke.

Katherine Black looked at him steadily while he waited for her answer.

"Fred Belton," she said finally (being asked for in marriage by a man is certainly sufficient excuse for employing his first name) "why do you ask me to marry you?"

He returned her gaze with equal steadiness. He took in the charm of face and figure, the wealth of dark hair, the steady big black eyes.

"Because," he said steadily, "I want you—very much."

Quite regardless of the roomful of

people, she reached out and laid her hand on his.

"Then," she said, "I'm glad—and sorry. I thought there was another reason—and I'm engaged to Mr. Urkmann. We only waited to see whether the play succeeded or not."

"Urkmann!" gasped Belton. "That—By George, though, he's no end of a great chap! What a lucky pair you are all around!" and the beam from behind the replaced spectacles was as genial as ever.

Belton's sign of relief was not quite as heartfelt as it should have been. The little warm glow which he had been nurs-

ing in the corner of his heart went out with a snap, and left a tiny hole which was inclined to hurt.

"Well," he said, "I'm getting to be a fossilized sort of a person—and I haven't very much of a home. I hope you two'll be so ridiculously happy that you'll have a corner by the fire where I can come and sit—just when I want to." She nodded quickly. "And maybe you'll even tell me when I ought to wear my rubbers!"

This time she took tight hold of both his hands, and the little hole in the corner of Belton's heart ceased hurting entirely.



CYNICAL COMMENTS

By Cesare North

TO speak badly in one living language and to misunderstand two dead ones proves a good education.

Temptation is a willingness of the flesh combined with a weakness of the spirit.

Autobiography was the earliest form of fiction.

A vegetarian is a person who has forgotten that all flesh is grass.

Decency was invented by the first tailor.

Marriage is stranger than fiction.

The chief work of mankind is to sub-edit the intentions of the Almighty.

The triangular arrangement beloved of modern novelists and dramatists presents the geometrical impossibility of two obtuse angles. The chief problem of modern fiction is to square such a triangle.

A cynic is a person whose one illusion is that he has none.

All that raises titters is not told.



SICK YOUNG LADY—I'm afraid I'm pretty bad, Doctor.
PHYSICIAN—Oh, no; not bad, only pretty.

ADORATION

By Richard Le Gallienne

AH, if you worship anything,
In deepest hush of silence bend
The lone adoring knee,
And only silence bring
Into the sanctuary.
Trust not the fairest word
Your soul to wrong:
Even the Rose's bird
Hath not a song
Sweet as the silence
Round about the Rose.
Ah, something goes,
Fails, and is lost in speech
That silence knows.
How should I speak
The hush about my heart
That holds your name
Shrined in a burning core
Of central flame,
Like names of seraphim
Mystically writ on cloud?
To speak your name aloud
Were to unhallow
Such a holy thing;
Therefore I bring
To your white feet
And your immortal eyes
Silence forever,
But in such a wise
Am silent as the quiet waters are,
Hiding some holy star
Amid hushed lilies
In a secret lake.
Ah, if a ripple break
The stillness halcyon—
The star is gone!



VOCAL notes are not always endorsed.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS
FOR THE BEST TITLE
TO THIS STORY.
TEN OTHER PRIZES.



SEE PAGE 160 OF
THIS ISSUE FOR
FULL DETAILS OF
THIS TITLE CONTEST.

By Robert Emmet MacAlarney

THE Skirt came to Mulberry Street in May. I was passing the time of day with old Matt the doorman when I heard the slap of a taxi door and saw a woman slip by. Taxis were a-plenty around the Block, but they rarely discharged feminine freight of this sort; they ran, mostly, to consignments of too-much-watch-chained aldermen and perfected district leaders.

"Hello," I said, as I got that little flavor of the real lady which the Tenderloin tries so hard to duplicate—and doesn't. "Somebody's French maid has been eloping with the family spoons. There'll be an Avenue hurry call this afternoon."

Across the asphalt, on the iron railing in front of their offices, the newspaper men were loafing, for all the world like the boys I saw at Yale when I went up to New Haven with the Fordham nine to play a game that we almost won. At the curb was a street piano, one yellow-handkerchiefed girl cranking, her double spinning a tambour ne, both of them showing the broadest of Neapolitan grins as the reporters fumbled for nickels. It was spring. Even Police Headquarters feels April and May. Around the corner from Little Italy the kids came streaming, squealing until they touched the hurdy-gurdy zone, then beginning to dance in that deeply serious way tenement youngsters have.

Silent Billy Quinn came out of the Rogues' Gallery, eying the waiting cab and me with a grin.

"Better hang around a bit, O'Hara," he advised. "The Inspector just asked about you."

But it was all of two hours before I was summoned. And every one of the

hundred and twenty minutes I had employed in trying to guess what newest police puzzle had made them send out a feminine ambulance call.

Frills were regarded slightly by Inspector Burke. You marked this in his offices—two almost bare rooms, one overlooking the wide courtyard of Headquarters with a view of the staircase that led, like a fire escape ladder, from the detention cells to the corridor. He wasted no time in preliminaries now.

"You're new to the Block, O'Hara," he began. "Don't get the idea I'm calling you in because there ain't fifty better thief takers than you in the front office. You're fair for a precinct product, they tell me. But you get your try-out early because you happen to have learned how to wear cits without giving away the fact that you're a cop."

He smiled as he said it. In his younger days Burke had been the one Central Office detective who could be used for watching diamond tiaras and chests of silver at a swell wedding. Then he had the figure of a 'varsity oarsman, a fine taste in pleated evening shirts and only a smattering of the Police Book of Graft. Once upon a time Burke had been called the "gentleman cop" of Mulberry. He had been rather proud of the title; even now he was said to mourn secretly because, dress as he might, his waist no longer created an illusion of thirty-two inches.

He let his chin drop for a moment upon his braided collar. Then he snapped: "If you fall down, remember you've had your chance. You won't get another." I saw him push a desk button and heard him say to his sergeant-secretary: "Show her in."

You who have met The Skirt—not as The Skirt, but in any one of a score of roles, from duchess down to book agent—and she has a repertory that would make a vaudeville protean star jealous—should have seen her as I did that day, with Dick Burke, chief of detectives, looking at us both, tugging at his bristly mustaches. He didn't get up when she entered. But I knew he was watching to see if I did and just how I did it.

"So this is Lieutenant O'Hara?" The gloved hand held out to me was as firm and businesslike as the tone that accompanied it. Raising my glance from chamois fingertip to chin, this is what I saw:

A girl—hardly a woman—although the "feel" of eyes and features betokened poise. But The Skirt was a girl for all her compelling gaze and lack of uneasiness in the presence of two Headquarters hacks. Not more than twenty-two, I thought; later I found I had been only a year out of the way. She surveyed me painstakingly, but it was no stare. Then she nodded.

"He'll do?" said Burke.

"He'll do," she replied. Then she asked me: "Will I do, Lieutenant?"

"The answer to that is yes," I said. I hadn't got it out of my system before I thought she'd think I was fresh and say so to the Inspector. But she didn't. Instead, she had me trailing after her out of the Mott Street entrance; I heard her tell the taxi chauffeur to drive north.

The Skirt had a canarylike fashion of cocking her head away from the person she was talking to. I got to know the habit well. But I never got beyond wanting to lean over and tilt her chin back to normal at such times. To see her talking eagerly to "stars" of the underworld like Chloroform Carrie—I'll tell the story of how she met Carrie single-handed in a game of move-in-the-dark some day, if she and Billy Quinn will let me—and "Count" Dalton, the bank sneak, with her head at an acute angle, always reminded me of a bird administering a twitter interview to the family cat who is making up its mind to jump.

You know how Maude Adams ap-

pealed to even gallery lowbrows when they strayed in to "Peter Pan" and "Chantecler." They didn't know why it "got over," but it did—surely the best part of it. And although I don't think I ever shall believe in fairies, or in the daybreak mission of a cock-a-doodle-doo, I know that from the first May afternoon in Mulberry Street until now my faith in The Skirt has been unshaken.

"You don't mind if I call you 'O'Hara,' do you?" she asked. "This is a business partnership, and it will probably be better to be informal from the start. For the present you'd better call me 'Miss Dawson.' It never occurred to me to ask whether you could drive a motor. It would be too bad if you couldn't: I'll need a chauffeur tomorrow."

I reached through the open window and tapped the taxi man on the shoulder. "To Washington Square," I ordered; we were abreast of the big arch in a jiffy.

"I'll take your place here," I explained. "Report to your garage." When he hesitated I gave him a glimpse of my shield.

"Now," said I, turning from the wheel, "where will you try me out?"

"Splendid!" cried The Skirt. "Let's go up to the Claremont. I'll tell you about things when we get there—if you qualify."

Even an old Headquarters hand can't be expected to remember the faces of all the Traffic Squad crossing men. I had to show cause a half dozen times on that joy riding dash up to the white cottage in the shadow of Grant's Tomb. The Skirt's eyes were sparkling as I led her to a corner table on the Hudson side that I was no stranger to.

The public doesn't know it, but there are no more willy-nilly tea fighters in New York than plain clothes men on Tenderloin or West Side details. Most of the deviltry in the hotel and flash apartment district is executed by the tea fighting and highball-at-the-absinthe-hour crowd.

When it comes to comparing the tenement dweller with the man and woman who have the front door opened for them

by a ten-dollar-a-week West Indian negro with gilt on his cuffs, in all likelihood we policemen would strike a balance in favor of Essex and Rivington streets. Crime is a bit more primitive there, naturally; they don't conceal motives on the East Side. That isn't the way the tenement dweller gets satisfaction out of lawbreaking. Even a second story man in the rookery section likes to rub in his work by leaving a scrawl on a bit of dirty envelope, by way of making his victim feel that a comedy burglar has paid a visit. Cheeky clues like that—the kiddish self-esteem of the cheap grade bad man—make the work of a precinct flatty on the East Side easy. In hotel and gingerbread apartment latitudes the crook hasn't time to be so helpfully frank. The pace is cut out too swiftly.

Over on the Jersey palisades the clouds hung low; the river glistened, too, but the water perspective itself wasn't as bright as the flash of dripping blades where a Columbia eight-oared shell cut the current as a sharp knife slivers cheese, without a hang between strokes; all of which meant that Jim Rice was getting every ounce out of his blue and white collegians, and was dreaming rosy dreams of the Poughkeepsie regatta in the prow of the bobbing launch astern.

There was the purring of many limousines as they slid, with power off, down the hill toward the viaduct; a white-capped maid herded two youngsters in blue and pink rompers yonder where the battered headstone of the little unchronicled child of old Manhattan days is guarded from the curious by an iron railing. May afternoon, orange pekoe, toasted muffins beneath the china platter helmet with its steaming vent—and The Skirt, elbows upon the linen, her gaze toward the west.

"Lemon, of course," she said, tilting the strainer. "You drove that ramshackle taxi nicely. You've earned your license. Before we begin you might as well know that my first name is 'Polly,' and that my years total just twenty-three—no, don't say that I look younger. It's of use to me in my work; everyone must think I'm girlishly artless. But I

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don't take it as a compliment, O'Hara. It merely annoys me; I belong to the working classes, and the working classes can't afford compliments."

We drank more than one cup of Claremont pekoe before I received my first marching orders. Somehow—Miss Dawson didn't tell me the story of her life—I got to know at least the skeletonized past of the girl Inspector Burke had begun to trust.

The Skirt had gone to college earnestly enough, although she hadn't intended to use her diploma for getting bread and butter. After graduation there came the earnest moment which touches the senior who has learned something more than making fudge behind blanket-screened windows. She went to the College Settlement. At the settlement she first learned to know the police. When a silly shopgirl vendetta on a recreation pier was fought out, two of her charges were mixed up in it. And because, as an amateur sociologist, she unraveled the story speedily, Burke heard of her through the captain at Eldridge Street.

The Inspector had tested The Skirt cautiously. Then he had begun to believe in her. From what she told me Burke had to be "shown" every step of the way—even that she was a thoroughbred. "We made one mistake when we banked on Mrs. X.," he had growled. "Mrs. X. wasn't a lady. But she pretended to be, and we fell for it."

"They're all women in the old picture, O'Hara," murmured The Skirt over her dangling teaspoon. "Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos, you know. I wonder which one I am?"

I thanked good old Fordham once more for the bits of this and that the college gave me when I wasn't cavorting on gridiron or diamond; my mythology was fragmentary but sound—what there was of it. I understood her. You see, The Skirt spoke, assuming that I was following. So I knew—and knowing was not unflattering—that Burke had said I was a bit above the average pavement pounder in the matter of small talk.

The memoranda she showed me were typewritten, with one or two lines in Burke's own scrawl. They read:

Archibald Tiverton, ex-Amherst professor, for three years lecturer on foreign travel, under management of Circuit Platform Bureau. Thirty-seven years old, author of "The Real Lafcadio Hearn," "Sunset on Fujiyama" (poems), "Secrets of the Samurai" and "On Muleback in the Yellowstone." His bachelor apartment in the Alpine, on West Thirty-second Street, contains best private collection of Japanese prints in New York. Was war correspondent for the London *Daily Mail* in the Yalu campaign; reached New York S.S. *Nippon*, with Japanese valet, Hato, April 10. Announces marriage to Enid Farnwell next Monday at The Poptars, Riverdale-on-Hudson.

"Exhibit A," said Miss Dawson. "Here is Exhibit B."

The second typewritten slip contained:

Tiverton found half garroted in bedroom shortly after midnight by his neighbor Hartwell Livingston, broker, who, hearing groans, forced the door. Stevens, ambulance surgeon from Roosevelt, pronounces Tiverton in no danger; suffering from shock and lacerated throat.

"That happened night before last," she explained. "Livingston's story is meager but straight, I think. I interviewed him as a reporter from the *Evening Gloat*. Burke had hushed the thing, with the aid of the ambulance doctor; there wasn't any slip posted. Naturally the newspapers haven't got hold of it. That was why Livingston gasped when I appeared. Both he and the Professor had been ordered not to say anything; had been told that if they were silent the matter would blow over without any sensation to delay the wedding. And I promised that I wouldn't print a word without letting them see proofs."

"They swallowed that?"

"They swallowed it as if it tasted good," said she. "And as I was leaving the broker's rooms he showed me the thing that had been knotted around Professor Tiverton's windpipe. Livingston just happened to recall that he'd stuffed it into the pocket of his pajama jacket. Why he didn't cut it he is helpless to explain; the Professor must have been gurgling pretty horridly."

She laid in my hand a narrow length of ribbon. It was dark blue, with two slim stripes, yellow and maroon, touching at one edge, and creased where it had been drawn taut.

"I haven't a tape measure," said Miss Dawson, "but this bit of ribbon is just twenty-four and one-half inches long. What size hat do you wear, O'Hara? Seven? Then you could wear this hat band as well as the Professor. Seven is the Tiverton size also. I contrived to knock a rather battered derby from a hall table when I was leaving the Alpine. A straw hat, size seven, takes a band twenty-four and one-half inches long—without the extra ribbon for the bow-knot. We'll imagine that this particular band either never had a bow or the bow was cut off because the owner didn't find it particularly useful. On my way downtown I stopped at Sharp & Bartlett's to examine a card of club and college fraternity samples. There were plenty of these shades, but not one of the ribbons had narrow maroon and yellow at the edge of a blue background."

"There's a cable office around the corner from that store," I suggested.

"Right-o!" exclaimed Miss Dawson. "I did cable, asking for the colors of the Tokio Cricket Club. I'll hear tonight. But that is kindergarten guessing. We may assume that the ribbon which Livingston broker untwisted from the neck of Tiverton professor is the hatband of the T. C. C."

She smiled. "I know you're waiting; I'm coming to the valet. Burke wanted to arrest him, but Tiverton declared he'd refuse to appear in police court. All Tiverton can remember is going to sleep about midnight and then finding Livingston bending over him with a whiskey flask. He insists that the motive was robbery; says he had valuable papers locked in a desk. But the man on post who got there first says nothing indicated that a thief had been at work."

Miss Dawson spread the silk strip upon the tablecloth. The ends were frayed where the threads had begun to ravel, and one end had been punctured thrice, so persistently that the hole edges were beginning to fray as well. Across the weave was a streak where something had rubbed. The Skirt fumbled a moment at her waist and produced a gilt belt buckle with its companion clasp. A pin or two, which she

evolved out of apparent nothingness, tucked the ribbon into position.

"There you have a very neat belt," she said, "a belt that might go well on an afternoon with tea in the marquee and the rest of it. Twenty-four and one-half inches is by no means a disgracefully large waist measure, you know. I could almost—well, there isn't the slightest doubt that this ribbon has been cut from some Panama to eke out parasol and pongee. Girls do that sort of thing a lot, O'Hara, as you ought to know. It's like making breast-pins out of West Point cadet buttons or wearing a Princeton football sweater when you go skating. I wonder when Professor Tiverton gave her that?"

The Skirt, according to habit, had cocked her head to one side and was gazing wistfully at the belt amid the tea things.

Her half-whispered question made me blurt: "Professor Tiverton gave what—to whom?"

Miss Dawson roused herself from reflectiveness. "That was stupid of me, of course. But it's all so perfectly simple, you know—piecing together the little things. Here's a Tokio Cricket Club hatband found knotted around the neck of Professor Tiverton, author of 'Sunset on Fujiyama.' Poetry, O'Hara! Poetry—remember that! This collection of verse is not to be overlooked. Do you happen to have read the book? Nice stanzas, Lieutenant. I picked up a copy after leaving Sharp & Bartlett's and read it on the way downtown. In fact, I have it with me."

She opened her handbag and drew out a volume in gray and gold. "Love poetry, all of it. Sonnets, rondeaus, even a villanelle or two—the whole box of rhymed tricks. When your scholar is sentimental he—for instance, let me read this ballade to Cho-Cho-San."

Something in my face amused her; she shut the book with a rustle of rice paper leaves and laughed. "Don't be afraid; I sha'n't tease. But 'Sunset on Fujiyama' makes me pretty sure that Professor Tiverton was a bit of a lady killer in the foreign colony. At all events, Tiverton goes to stay at the

Riverdale Casino tomorrow. They rehearse for the wedding on Sunday afternoon, and you and I will motor out to The Poplars also. The place is a half-swagger boarding house, and almost deserted so early in the season. No one is there save the Farnwell girl, her maiden aunt and a rheumatic retired navy lieutenant-commander. There are chauffeurs' quarters above the garage that are empty except for the retired navy man's motorcycle and a shabby electric brougham in which Miss Farnwell makes a few keeping-up-appearances calls, poor girl. You know the Farnwells went to smash in Smelters a year or two ago."

As I waited in front of the Hotel Astor the next morning, out came The Skirt with a lavender veil swathing her hat and a porter to lash a small trunk behind the car. I touched my visor, sitting motionless while the pavement flunkey tucked her in. It was not until we shot into the Drive from Seventy-second Street that she leaned forward and spoke.

"You'll do; indeed you'll do, O'Hara," I heard through the lavender veil. "No one would suspect that Miss Lachesis of Mulberry Street was on tour."

The Skirt's laugh, plus the fresh colors of the morning and joy in a car that leaped under me like a living thing, made me forget that I was only a policeman; wiped quite from remembrance the way Inspector Burke scowled when greeted by news of a failure.

Under the porte-cochère of The Poplars a trim maid bobbed to Miss Dawson, handing her out after a small Buttons had swung open the tonneau barrier and informed me that if I would drive to the rear a man would take the trunk upstairs. I had barely shunted the car into the shed before a tubby party—I guessed at once that he must be the retired navy lieutenant-commander—puffed through the door in Norfolk jacket and black puttees. He had just finished his after-luncheon six miles—to Yonkers and back.

"Hello!" he said. "You're the new guest's chauffeur? That car makes my motorcycle look cheap enough. We old navy fellows can't afford cars. Never

enlist in the navy, son. It's bad enough for the old chaps when they get too tottery for the wardroom, but it's worse for the enlisted men."

I had dinner with the neat maid and Buttons, both of them eager to chatter about "poor Miss Farnwell," happy that she was to be saved at last from being hard up and heckled by a sour maiden aunt. I was disappointed because The Skirt did not send for me to bring the car around. But when I saw the almost garroted Professor anchor his own motor upon the lawn—he was alone, which disappointed me again, for I wanted a glimpse of his valet—I knew that Miss Dawson would hardly let slip a chance like this.

The glow on the veranda behind the mosquito screens and the tinkle of china told us that coffee was being served *al fresco*. Then lights in the drawing room were turned up; we could see it well from where we—the trim little maid and I—were sitting. There were stars, and the little maid was profitably communicative, having banished Buttons within, where doubtless he was more useful than without. After a while someone touched the piano and sang—a woman.

"It's Miss Farnwell," said Mary, signifying that she would not protest if I lighted a cigarette. "She never sings except when the Professor comes. She's awfully in love. But I never can imagine what a woman sees in tall, thin men with Vandyke beards."

"Thank you," said I to Mary.

"What for?" she asked.

"That did sound foolish," I hastened to remark. "I was only glad that I didn't have a Vandyke beard."

"Don't get fresh," exclaimed the trim little maid. "That's always the way with you chauffeurs. Listen! Ain't that pretty?"

It really was, and acting upon my suggestion, she and I tiptoed nearer. We could see, through screen and flimsy curtain, Miss Farnwell standing at the piano—and bless me, was I wrong? No, The Skirt herself was bending over the keys.

"That's your mistress playing," said Mary. "She gave me a dollar for mak-

ing her comfortable. How long is she going to stay?"

I didn't know, and I said so. Then I forgot the stars, the smell of green things growing in the night, even my cigarette, which grew weary of waiting for attention and scorched my fingers. For I had an excellent view of Professor Tiverton, who was leaning back in a wicker chair. The Vandyke beard to which Mary had objected was in evidence, and by the way his nervous hand twiddled a cigar I knew that professorial mood was not altogether peaceful.

Miss Farnwell stitched contralto sadness through everything she sang—"everything" meaning the severely classical, the sort one gets at a musical morning just after the opera season has closed, when high-priced stars are looking for small change before going to Covent Garden or the Riviera. She soon left the piano and went over to a white-haired woman who was spreading old-fashioned black and jet over a davenport.

"That's the older Miss Farnwell," confided Mary. "She's a lady all right, but she scolds Miss Enid something dreadful when they're alone."

The Skirt did not rise. Instead, she looked toward the Professor—I marked the canarylike tilt of neck and chin—and said something. Then her fingers raced over the keys and she launched into some of that jolly stuff from "The Dollar Princess." Professor Tiverton seemed to like it; his panetela stopped wriggling between puffs; now and then he beat time as if he were enjoying himself. From "The Dollar Princess" Miss Dawson backtracked over several Broadway seasons and finally tinkled snatches of good old Gilbert and Sullivan. When she came to "The Mikado" she sang:

"Ah, pray make no mistake,
We are not shy;
We're very wide awake,
The moon and I."

"Ooh-goody!" gasped Mary at my elbow.

The Skirt did not pause on account of the prim handpats of Miss Farnwell's aunt—the bride-to-be sat immovable enough. She merely tossed a laugh

toward the davenport and slid into another half-forgotten fragment of operetta; she put into it all the minor cadences that piano wire can express:

"For she was the jewel of Asia,
The geisha—the geisha."

Creak! The Professor fairly leaped from his wicker. Mary, loyal listener, commented acidly upon his rudeness as he strode toward the older Miss Farnwell. He meant to take his leave, and he did so while Miss Dawson strummed. The screen doors slammed; there were steps upon the gravel and the sputter of a motor. The Professor's car was going back to the Riverdale Casino; I whispered good night to Mary.

It was pleasant on Sunday morning to open eyes upon something not at all like a row of station house cots, to note the sheen of the Hudson and robins hopping on the greensward. I buckled me into puttees gaily enough, and when Buttons brought me summons after breakfast the car was ready. The Skirt ordered me to drive her to church, the tiny Episcopal chapel where the wedding rehearsal was to be that afternoon. I steered thither by a roundabout way.

"The girl's really in love," said Miss Dawson. "But she's afraid of the Professor, and the Professor is equally afraid of something else. It may be well to know, O'Hara—few persons seem to realize it—that you detect fear, concealed fear, in men and women quite differently. If you really wish to know when a man is afraid, don't look him squarely in the eye; look at the expression *around* the eye. A boy masks his terror better than a girl. And a woman's tremor always shows in the center of the pupil. Fright makes a clean score when the feminine is its target."

I thought this a bit overdone, but I've tried the experiment since. She was right. Put on a black muslin mask in the Rogues' Gallery at any morning police "at home." You'll find that men and women crooks show the white feather just as Miss Dawson described it. That was one of the little things she "pieced together." She never told Burke things like that. Probably she

knew he would only smile behind those bristly mustaches. She understood Burke. He looked for results; he never bothered to think about the common fractions with which he solved his problems.

Burke was interested in only one thing as far as we were concerned. He knew that an open season for the strangling of ex-college professors would not be healthy for a Mulberry Street dynasty. He had dreamed of another bit of ribbon around a Tiverton neck. The Skirt and I had been detailed to prove this dream untrue. The Inspector, of course, reasoned that, once the wedding was over and the Professor off on his honeymoon, with probably more globetrotting on hand, this particular crime germ would not be likely to reappear.

Professor Tiverton drove over to The Poplars at three for Miss Farnwell and her aunt. When they returned I noticed a kit bag beside the Japanese valet. A half-hour later Miss Dawson came to the garage, a frown creasing her forehead.

"Tiverton and Hato have come for the night," she said. "The older Miss Farnwell is scandalized; the bride-to-be is apathetic; Tiverton is dogged, and the servants are chattering. It means that whatever the Professor is afraid of will happen tonight—if it happens at all. He's here to prevent it. I shall sit up late reading, and before I go to bed I'll slip the front door chain. Better have our car ready near the lilacs. You are Old Dog Tray on the veranda tonight, O'Hara."

I had almost forgotten that there were such things as katydids until I heard them on The Poplars front porch. A katydid is as noisy as an alarm clock to a man unaccustomed to the country. Three times after midnight the hour struck, and as often I tiptoed into the hallway, listening. I was beginning to smell the freshness which creeps over leaves and grass to mark the hour-off approach of daylight when I imagined I heard a cry. Gently I stole across the veranda and swung the door open. No, I was wrong—and yet—

I dodged; from above the spurt of an

electric flash lamp shot once, streaking the stairs. The ray missed me, then vanished; I was still crouching, wondering who had aimed it, when something thudded beside me. Again silence, save for a rustling overhead. My revolver was in my right hand while I groped with the other. And my fingers drew back as if stung, for they touched a face—a face with a beard.

Professor Tiverton had not been able to prevent what he feared, after all. I shoved the pistol into my pocket; I needed both hands to tug at the knot around his throat. He groaned while I worked, but the noose loosened. If only he wasn't dirked somewhere! I could feel no warm smear. I would have gripped the banisters and gone up, but there came the slam of a door, the click of a lock, the pad of stockinged feet, in too much haste for stealthy running, and one very clear call from The Skirt.

My plunging stumble for the landing, a blaze as some hand threw on the second story incandescents, and the blur of a man leaping past my shoulder—all these happened together. It was easy to find the locked door. I kicked it in. The Skirt was kneeling on the floor beside Enid Farnwell. In the corner the white-haired aunt was moaning. Miss Dawson still wore her dinner frock; both bare arms were bleeding from deep scratches.

"She's all right, O'Hara!" she cried. "I got here in time, I think—unless she goes mad! Get Hato! Quick!"

As I turned I faced the navy veteran, raincoat flung over blue flannel pajamas. The servants were screaming, Mary's note leading in the clamor.

"Come on, you!" I hurled at the raincoated one. "There's a man to get for this!" And I dragged him downstairs where Tiverton was blinking stupidly at the electrolier. The Professor was fully dressed, save for his coat; his shirt was in tatters.

"What the devil!" shouted my recruit. He would have stopped, but I hauled him upon the lawn only to let go of him and swear. With a whirl like the rise of a flushed partridge our car had

come to life and was pounding down the drive toward the highway.

If they breed them as quick-witted at Annapolis nowadays our output of future admirals is good enough; it was the one-time lieutenant-commander who thought first. "The motorcycle," he grunted. Together we raced for the garage. "I can't ride the damned things!" I said, while we wheeled the battered old machine out. Down upon the macadam the Headquarters car was drumming with a will.

"Lucky I stopped to slip my shoes on!" gasped the old fellow, shucking his slicker and cramming my pistol into his handkerchief pocket. Rheumatism tomorrow all right! You follow in the electric!"

Between us we got the bucking wheel into motion; there was a staccato bark to reply to that waning drumming; I boarded the Farnwell brougham and moved feebly after.

It was a chase by starlight and the fireflies, for our car had been standing with unlit lamps; it and the motorcycle were out of hearing by the time I made my first turn—the electric rolled with maddening slowness. I may have covered two miles, perhaps more, before I braked hard; a blot of foliage indicated that I must be at the hairpin turn into Mosholu Parkway. Then I heard the navy man's hail.

"Hello! That you? Thank God, you've come! Matches here, quick! Your car's gone smash; most of it's over the bank yonder! Our man's hurt! He's even stopped groaning!"

The old fellow's teeth were clicking, for it was cool; dawn was beginning.

"Gently now; he's just about done for!" said the veteran. "Couldn't have known about the curve. I kept yelling, but he didn't hear."

Out from the pinning grip of a shattered axle we lifted Professor Tiverton's valet, laying him upon the roadway, the fat naval officer with the clicking teeth rubbing at the Jap's wrist as I struck a match. It wasn't the breeze that extinguished the blaze; it was the trembling of my hand. I felt a shade less sorry for the man we had left blinking

at a hall chandelier. Hato had wrecked The Skirt's car; and Hato's face the flare of the match had shown me. But all covering had been torn from his right side—and Hato was a woman!

"Hell, son!" puffed the navy man when the third match flamed. "And look here—geisha. She has the iris mark, and she's dying!"

I saw the trace of a tattooer's needle just above the shoulder blade. A pale blue iris blossom it was.

"I've been on the Asiatic station," he muttered, buttoning the torn jacket gently. "There's just one place in Tokio where geishas wear the iris."

His touch seemed to arouse her; the eyelids quivered but did not open—then the lips. The shivering navy veteran bent down to listen. They parted, curved weakly—closed. He stood up. "Sayonara," she said. It's all over, son."

We brought her back in the creeping brougham. The house was quiet enough now, and The Skirt was waiting on the veranda. She understood even before I lifted out our burden; the navy man vanished toward the garage.

"You didn't shoot?" she asked. And, seeing my shake of the head, she said: "Bring her in here." She closed the drawing room door behind us. "It was my fault, but perhaps it is better so," she said. I knew that a woman was seeking revenge. I thought Hato was an accomplice. It was not until I heard Enid Farnwell shriek and then tugged at the soft arms choking her that I knew the woman had been with us all the time. I was trying to tell her I would help her get her revenge in a different way when she fled. I should have helped her, I think."

Miss Dawson strode over to a Chip-pendale table and raised the window shade behind it. She laughed, not at all prettily, and picked up a volume in gray and gold, Professor Tiverton's "Sunset on Fujiyama."

"Poetry, O'Hara!" she exclaimed. "Men write the most and the worst of it. And now it is really sunset for Cho-Cho-San!"

She tossed the book into a corner, and, going over to the davenport, kissed the silent geisha. "Sayonara, O Cho-Cho-San!" she said.

"Sayonara?" I echoed. "That is what she whispered to the navy man."

"Sayonara—it means farewell."

From where she stood she could bend down and touch the piano. Her fingers swept the keys very softly:

"For she was the jewel of Asia,
The geisha—the geisha."

Her head sank upon the music rack; by her shoulders I knew The Skirt was crying. So I tiptoed out and left her with the girl of the iris blossom.

At eleven we stood on the platform of the Riverdale station, waiting for the whistle of the train that would take us back to town.

"I telephoned to the Inspector," she said. "There will be no scandal, probably—that is, in the open. Of course Burke doesn't care about that. The Professor goes abroad next week, and naturally there won't be any wedding." She laid a hand upon my arm. "There is just one thing to be said for him, O'Hara. She followed him, and she wouldn't go back. After all, it was a bit brave to face a Tokio Cricket Club bowstring every hour of the twenty-four."

"What made you play that song to Tiverton?" I asked.

"His ribbon noose was tied in a true lover's knot," replied The Skirt. "No one but a woman or a florist's clerk ties true lover's knots. The trouble was that the woman was Japanese and I was stupid. Not a good beginning for our partnership, O'Hara. Inspector Burke will laugh at us. Better luck next time!"



LEMONS IN THE GARDEN OF LOVE

By Nina Almirall Royall

THE only time that a woman doesn't trust her instinct is when it tells her that the man she loves has ceased to love her.

The wise woman is she who realizes that, even in the Garden of Love, men do not care for fruit so ripe that it falls without plucking.

A man loves a woman when he has time; a woman always has time to love some man.

When a woman begins to live over her love affairs in retrospect, it shows that there are no more in prospect.

Lack of imagination is woman's greatest safeguard against loving unwisely.

All endeavors to collect outstanding debts from Cupid are foredoomed to be unsuccessful.

Love making without experience is as brick without straw in house building.

If a woman cannot be one man's meat, she is likely to become another man's poison.

It is an easy climb up the stepping stones of a dead past to a lively future.

When a man makes up his mind to get married, a little thing like a disappointment in love seldom deters him.

A tactless woman is unpopular; a tactless lover is inexcusable.

That man who most readily swears to a woman that she is the "light of his life" is the very one who fails to provide fuel to keep it burning.

Constancy in woman is desirable—in man astonishing.

Woman is fickle in order to justify man's estimate of her; man is fickle because he can't help it; the one big "trust" that cannot be broken is woman's faith in man.



"THE law should absolutely prohibit all guessing contests."
"H'm; what substitute for matrimony do you advocate?"

AT THE SIGN OF THE SILVER SPOON

By Lucine Finch

PERSONS.—MRS BARRINGTON-WHITE, *who loves her husband.*
MRS. ARTHUR CHALMERS, *who also does.*
MISS ALICIA FOSTER, *who has none.*
WAITER, *who is one.*

PLACE: *New York.*

TIME: *One o'clock on a pleasant afternoon.*

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE and MRS. ARTHUR CHALMERS
are seated at a small round table with service for three.
There are some faded flowers nearby, which MRS. CHALMERS
has removed, with some emphasis, from the table.

MRS. CHALMERS.—At one, I told her.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—She'll be late, of course. An artist.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Of course. You keep a sharp lookout. I'm perfectly blind without my glasses.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Astigmatism?

MRS. CHALMERS.—No—age.

MRS. BARRINGTON - WHITE. — Non-sense, Margaret!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Thank you, my dear; I hoped you'd say that. She's smallish and darkish.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—And stylish?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Heavens, no! I told you an artist.

MRS. BARRINGTON - WHITE. — Well—frowsy?

MRS. CHALMERS.—No, but queer. Individual, I believe you call it—erratic, temperamental.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry says that's an overworked word.

MRS. CHALMERS.—It is, indeed. I hate to use it. That and "convinced" are my pet abominations. But she's *it* just the same.

MRS. BARRINGTON - WHITE. — Yes, "convinced" is such a nice word if they'd let it alone.

MRS. CHALMERS.—She's sure to have on good colors.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Is this she? She looks uncertain.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Yes. Waiter, call that young lady. Yes, the one with the feather. No, not that one. I beg your pardon; a mistake. Oh, Miss Foster, here we are!

MISS FOSTER.—Mrs. Chalmers! How nice to find you directly! I had no hope. Isn't it terrifying to see so many hungry people together?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Mrs. Barrington-White, Miss Alicia Foster.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—So glad!

MISS FOSTER.—Are you Miss Leverts's Mrs. White? Really! Well, this is nice! I've heard Miss Leverts speak of you so often.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE. — You painted Miss Leverts's portrait, didn't you? Charming! You caught her, and that's not easily done. She's very elusive.

MISS FOSTER.—I loved doing her.

(*The long suffering WAITER has shifted from one long suffering foot to the other. At last he pokes a very large menu card at MRS. CHALMERS.*)

MRS. CHALMERS.—Yes, of course, food.

MISS FOSTER.—With this inconceivable array, we ought to find something.

MRS. CHALMERS.—I doubt it. I'm suspicious of too many words. And the more foreign they are, the less I trust them. But everybody comes here.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—It's always crowded. You two choose. I never know what I want; Barry always tells me.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Well, I eat everything. Being just a plain person, nothing is expected of me; I can be hungry. Let's see. Drinks first.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Drinks! Tea the strongest.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Let's be positively devilish!

MISS FOSTER.—Mrs. Chalmers, how killing you are!

WAITER (*with passionate obsequiousness*).—Chicken, ladies?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Tea, coffee, chocolate, cocoa, milk, buttermilk, skimmed milk—it's not down, but they're sure to have it. Now which—or all?

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Well, I'll begin. Tea for me. No, buttermilk. (*To the WAITER*) Is it good?

WAITER.—Excellent, madam.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Umph—doubtful. Better take tea, Kit. Chocolate for me. Now, Miss Foster, as guest of honor, you last.

MISS FOSTER.—Buttermilk; I'm trying to get fat.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—I believe I'll try the buttermilk. Yes, I'll take buttermilk.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Don't skim it.

WAITER.—You will find it already prepared, madam.

MRS. CHALMERS.—I don't doubt it. Well, my dear, I had just told Mrs. Barrington-White—she insists upon all of Barry's name; don't forget—that you weren't stylish, and here you descend upon us in all this grandeur! I never saw you look so—human!

MISS FOSTER.—Yes, I had the tail of my coat cut off. Isn't it hideous? You couldn't persuade Mr. Chalmers?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Didn't want him. You see, Kit, Miss Foster is one of Arthur's "girls." They all adore him.

He waits upon them, sees them to trains and boats and things. And they think him—*misunderstood*! Now confess, little lady!

MISS FOSTER.—Mrs. Chalmers! How absurd you are!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Honestly, now, don't you consider Arthur Chalmers misunderstood?

MISS FOSTER.—Oh, well, if it comes to that, we all are.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Not I. I generally manage to make people know what I mean.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry knows me like a book.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Does it bore him to read you as much as I bore Arthur?

MISS FOSTER.—Mrs. Chalmers! You're dreadful!

MRS. CHALMERS.—No—truthful. It's synonymous. However, it's just as truthful the other way round.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Don't let her disturb you, dear Miss Foster. She doesn't mean a word of it. She adores Arthur. Last year she wouldn't tell him about her appendix because she didn't want to stop his golf vacation. If that isn't devotion!

MRS. CHALMERS.—No; that's wisdom. Nothing could stop Arthur's golf. Don't ever try to interfere with that, Miss Foster, unless you really want to see Arthur!

WAITER.—Ladies, I—

MRS. CHALMERS.—Don't be impatient, waiter. We came here to be leisurely. We don't want to be hurried. . . . What! Well, let them wait. You'll not be sorry for it.

WAITER.—Certainly, madam.

MRS. CHALMERS.—However, we will order. Sandwiches? Salad? What?

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Salad sounds perfect.

MISS FOSTER.—Oh, yes, salad.

MRS. CHALMERS.—"Newport"—I've been there and I hate it. It's vulgar. Let's not have it. "Esthetic." Heavens! What's that?

MISS FOSTER.—"Waldorf" covers a multitude of sins.

MRS. CHALMERS.—And apple peels. Lettuce is—just itself. Let's have let-

tuce. And tomato you can't disguise. Lettuce and tomato, then? Good! For three.

MISS FOSTER.—Oh, have you seen "The Blue Bird"?

MRS. CHALMERS (*portentously*) — I have.

MISS FOSTER.—Well? And don't you *adore* it?

MRS. CHALMERS.—I don't.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry said it made him a boy again. We've been twice. I love it!

MRS. CHALMERS.—I went alone and it made me sniff. If there's anything I hate, it's to be made to sniff in public. Then I didn't like the Dog's tongue to hang out all the time. He wasn't dog enough to warrant it. The Cat was perfect! But why on earth Maeterlinck didn't conceive the Cat a woman I don't see!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry spoke of that. But he said Maeterlinck was far too clever to do that in this age. It might be taken as an offense.

MRS. CHALMERS.—By the suffragists, do you mean? Nonsense. They have a sense of humor, I should hope. Else they'd better not set out to win!

MISS FOSTER.—But the children, aren't they dear?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Oh, the children are dear enough, but Maeterlinck's symbolism is— (*To the WAITER*) What, are you here yet? . . . No, nothing more just now. We'll order desserts later. Oh, yes. Waiter! Call our waiter, please! Swiss cheese sandwiches—did you put it down? For three. That's all.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Let's start in on rolls. Do you like hard or soft ones?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Whichever there isn't. But the real ones are in Vienna—poppy seed ones.

MISS FOSTER.—Mr. Chalmers told me all about your trip. He's such a dear! And doesn't he appreciate things tremendously?

MRS. CHALMERS.—This is the unsalted butter. Try it. What sorts of things?

MISS FOSTER.—Oh, everything. He's

so keen. Art—the world—people—feelings.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Feelings! I know your stage. Arthur is, he *says*, sensitive. I call it touchy. But I'm his wife.

MISS FOSTER.—Mrs. Chalmers!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Pass the pepper, there's a dear. Yes, I used to call it sensitive once; now it's plain *touchy*.

MISS FOSTER.—I don't believe you appreciate him.

MRS. CHALMERS.—You see, Kit!

MISS FOSTER.—He's such an old dear!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Yes, isn't he? Bold as a baby!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Margaret Chalmers! You're incorrigible. Miss Foster is believing you!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Oh, no, she isn't! That's the pity. She can't! I say to him: "Go ahead, Arthur. Have all the fun you want with all of them! Only know, that if one of them had to be with you for a week she'd bore you worse than I do. And maybe she couldn't cook! And you'd bore her into hysterics! So don't get vain."

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Aren't men, anyhow, the most helpless creatures? The other day Barry said, actually reproachfully: "Kitty, I nearly froze today without any heavier flannels." "Well," I said, "why didn't you wear them, dear?" "You didn't lay them out," he said.

MRS. CHALMERS.—And he meant it, too! Last night Arthur came into my room. I was reading Galsworthy after I'd gone to bed, and was immensely comfortable! "Margy," he said coaxingly—and I'm always suspicious when he's coaxing—"Margy, where's a new bulb for my reading lamp?" "It's downstairs in the dining-room," I said, "in the left hand drawer of the serving table." He stood looking at me, stupidly. So I repeated: "Downstairs, Arthur, in the left hand drawer of the serving table, in the dining room." Then he turned slowly and went away and three minutes later his light was out! That's Arthur!

MISS FOSTER.—Poor old dear!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Certainly! Poor old dear! I'm only six months younger

than he. Now, if you'd been there, you'd have trotted down and got it for him!

MISS FOSTER.—I would, indeed!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Not if you'd been there twenty-one years! That's marriage!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry and I've been married eighteen years. He wouldn't ask me to do it or want me to, but if I saw he needed it, he couldn't keep me from it!

MRS. CHALMERS.—And he wouldn't try to keep you. Oh, Kitty, I know *you*! You'd have had it all ready for him, and a rose beside it! *And* the leaf of his book turned down!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Yes, and Barry would have brought me the rose! Desserts? Or am I only a guest?

MRS. CHALMERS.—You're only a guest—not changing the subject *too* abruptly—but you may have a dessert. Let's see. Where's that awful card. Now! Sago pudding. Bread pudding—scraps! Soufflé prunes! Fancy prunes!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—“Desire precieuse”—what's that?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Heavens! Don't ask me! I'm taking prunes.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Well, I believe I'll try it. I don't know what it is.

MRS. CHALMERS.—I'm taking prunes because I *do* know what they are. Like Puritan ancestors, prunes are—safe! Although, to tell the truth, I've never had such abiding faith in Puritan ancestors as might be. There must have been *some* nice ones! And, by the way, speaking of Puritans, have you heard the latest escapade of little Miss Lowdon's?

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry told me a little about it. He hates to criticize women—even suffragists. But he thought the whole affair shocking. And so did I.

MRS. CHALMERS.—So it *is* shocking. But a jolly tale, and I'll tell it. You know who she is, of course, Miss Foster?

MISS FOSTER.—I'm afraid I don't.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Don't be afraid. She is the daughter of old Judge Lowdon, the Tenth Street Lowdons, an absolutely

conservative family. And Eunice is a howling—literally, too—suffragist.

MISS FOSTER.—Oh, that Miss Lowdon! I've heard of her.

MRS. CHALMERS.—She's really quite a nice little person to meet. Simple and not affected. But she hurts the cause by doing foolish things that all women, even suffragists, deplore. It's a pity. Her family have broken with her.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry knows her brother. He's a nice fellow. Barry says she ought to be locked up.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Well, from his own immediate point of view, Barry is right. I dare say she will be in time, and that she knows she will be. I suppose you know that big Peter Willoughby *carried* her out!

MISS FOSTER.—How exciting! Out of what?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Out of the big political meeting at Carnegie Hall last Tuesday. Bodily!

MISS FOSTER.—Not really! Oh, please tell us!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry is such a clam I couldn't get much of it from him. He was there. I'm dying to know. They say her family paid an awful amount to keep it out of the papers.

MRS. CHALMERS.—That's not true, of course. Her father is very highly thought of, and—well, you know how *hopelessly* respectable her brother is. And stupid beyond words!

MISS FOSTER.—Do go on.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Well, some man was talking a lot and saying little, when up popped pretty little Miss Lowdon and demanded to be heard.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Imagine! In Carnegie Hall!

MRS. CHALMERS.—There was an instant hush, then hisses—enough to disconcert a hardened suffragist. Not so little Miss Lowdon. She said *we* weren't living in the Middle Ages, and she would be heard. Arthur was sitting on the platform with some other men. He said she looked too little and adorable!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Barry said he positively blushed for her.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Well, she didn't

blush for herself. If you please, the bold child said she'd *something to say!*

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Fancy!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Yes, fancy having anything to say—a woman! No wonder it caused an uproar.

MISS FOSTER.—But heavens, they ought to be used to it by now! Women have been saying things for some time.

MRS. CHALMERS.—I know. But flying machines are being used, yet we aren't riding in them on five-cent fares! Men can't get used to it. They're slower-minded.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Perhaps surer-minded, also. Barry says let the women *think* all they please, but let them not make public spectacles of themselves. Let them keep quiet about it.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Barry's delicious!

MISS FOSTER.—Isn't it Shakespeare who says: "Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak"?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Well, evidently Barry and big Peter didn't agree with Shakespeare. For when little Miss Lowdon began to think, they tried to—blow her out! She's such a mite to be so—saucy.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—She's twenty-seven!

MRS. CHALMERS.—They tried to shout her down, but she shouted louder. In the midst of it all big Peter Willoughby, who adores the women, picked her up and quietly walked out with her.

MISS FOSTER.—Not *really!*

MRS. CHALMERS.—Yes. He simply made it his business to get her out.

MISS FOSTER.—Were they engaged or—anything?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Very much so while going out.

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—He wouldn't let her make a fool of herself.

MISS FOSTER.—So he made a fool of her! I call that chivalry!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Well, it was, really. Everybody could see that she didn't want to go. She kept on talking, however. Her parting shot over his shoulder was: "I'm glad someone is man enough to *take up the cause!*"

MISS FOSTER.—Well! What on earth did he do when he got her outside?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Put her down, I suppose, and tipped his hat and left her. They'd locked the doors.

MISS FOSTER.—Without an apology?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Apology! Heavens, child, what could he say? Imagine apologizing to a lady for abducting her from a meeting!

MISS FOSTER.—Mercy! Do you *know* this Mr. Willoughby?

MRS. CHALMERS.—Everybody knows Peter Willoughby. He belongs to all the clubs. He's rich and independent—not married, I mean. And as silent as a sphinx. I adore him!

MISS FOSTER.—He sounds too good to be true!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—He *is* nice. But imagine Barry's carrying a woman out!

MRS. CHALMERS.—When I told Arthur how I felt about it, and how I adored a man who would do that as charmingly as big Peter did, he said: "Lord, Margy, I couldn't carry *you!*" As if I wanted him to!

MRS. BARRINGTON-WHITE.—Dear old Barry carried me up and down stairs for a week when I sprained my ankle.

MRS. CHALMERS.—Ah! That's quite different! You wanted him to. It's the man who picks the woman up against her will and runs off with her—that's the hero. We're all alike. It's the Eve in us.

MISS FOSTER.—Heavens! If she should be—fat!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Don't look at me! She's got no business to be fat if she's romantic. I like the good old primitive way of braining a woman, throwing her over your shoulder and off—to the cave!

MISS FOSTER.—Let me meet your big Peter Willoughby, there's a dear!

MRS. CHALMERS.—Down goes my poor old Arthur for the young god! Yes, I'll ask him to meet you Thursday at dinner. Will that do? . . . Good! That's right, put it down, so you won't forget it! And you needn't expect him to throw you over his shoulder when he takes you out to dinner. For he won't do it. He's only primitive at times.

Well, it has been nice. Have we all our traps?

WAITER.—Thank you, madam!

A BALLADE OF DESPERATION

By Eunice Ward

SLOWLY I'm learning with pain
This form of verse to indite;
What with the rhyme and refrain,
I'm in a terrible plight.
Thread of connection is slight;
Having no thoughts, I must pad;
All inspiration takes flight—
How do you write a ballade?

Fancy and Form, ah, the twain
Cast on each other a blight;
Form with his metres of chain
Holding poor Fancy down tight,
Wherefore she sulks, just for spite,
Leaving me much to the bad.
I would slay Form if I might!
How do you write a ballade?

Could I my object attain,
I should be satisfied, quite;
When it was done, I would fain
Thrust the thing out of my sight.
In these times cultured, polite,
Making of verse is a fad,
Proving we're all very bright.
How do you write a ballade?

L'ENVOI

I have been at it all night;
Slowly it's driving me mad.
Tell me, if this is not right,
How do you write a ballade?



THE great trouble about the things we get for nothing is that we generally have to pay the freight.

AT THE RIGOLO BALL

By Joseph Ernest

POSITIVELY the first occasion on which Chichine was known to take life seriously was the night Harold Trenton returned to the Rigolo Ball. Perhaps you saw Chichine in the days when her Spanish dances made the Rigolo a center of attraction on the Rive Gauche—blithe, lithe little Chichine with the blue-black curls and the impudent dresses, who was more sparkling than the champagne they sold there and prettier than the picture posters that advertised it. If you have the good fortune to remember her, you will recall how consistently she appeared to be laughing at life, on the Figaro principle that as long as she laughed she could not be compelled to cry; and you will doubt that she was ever really serious at all. The fact remains that she was.

It started this way. Trenton drifted into the Bal Rigolo during the interval one evening in the dead season of July. He had been driven off the Boul' Mich' by acute boredom, and had continued southward in the hope that he might strike something that was really Paris and not a mere pasteboard and tinsel sideshow for foreigners. He saw Chichine dance an exhilarating tango on the tiny stage below the orchestra gallery, and when she tripped past his table on the promenade some time later he asked her to dance with him. Being young and of pleasing appearance, Trenton had a way of asking point blank for anything he wanted.

After she had given him six dances—there are no chaperons at the Bal Rigolo—he was no longer bored. He took her to one of the boxes in the gallery, ordered iced pink syrups and said:

"I love you, Chichine."

Being rich, too, he had a way of saying anything that came into his head.

"And I also love thee, my Harry," responded Chichine politely. "Send me, if you please, some picture postcards of Amérique."

"I will do more," said Trenton. "For every dance that you are kind enough to give me before I leave Paris, I will bring you on my next visit a whole packet of them."

When the time came to leave Paris the strict letter of his promise would have bound him to bring back something less than a suitcase full of picture postcards, and that without allowing any postcards at all for time spent over iced pink syrups in the gallery boxes. Over the last of the pink syrups Trenton said:

"Well, it is tomorrow that I depart."

"Yes, it is tomorrow," echoed Chichine, laughing a pearly little laugh at nothing at all.

"Kiss me good-bye, Chichine," demanded Trenton.

"I do not kiss American gentlemen," replied Chichine, with another laugh. "But I will give you a most distinguished squeeze-hand."

And after Trenton had tried to look as if he were contented with the squeeze-hand, and had departed, Chichine continued to laugh throughout the evening. She laughed when she found a hole just far enough below the knee of her black silk stocking to show when she danced on the little stage; she laughed when Margot la Brune told her she looked tired; she laughed when she forgot to go to the office to collect her salary at the proper time, and she laughed when on reflection she discovered that she had nothing in particular to laugh about—en-

tirely according to the Figaro prescription as before.

In a day less than six weeks Trenton returned to the Bal Rigolo, and startled Chichine very much indeed. There was nothing remarkable in his first visit, of course. Most people went to the Bal Rigolo when they tired of the Paris that is smart, and when they felt adventurous enough. But that he should return was purely surprising. Chichine left her partner and ran across the floor to meet him.

"It is thee, for example, my Harry!" she exclaimed. "When didst thou return to Paris?"

"An hour ago," said Trenton. "A friend who came with me was ravenous for dinner, and I could not get away from the hotel until now. I am glad to be back. It was too sad over there in New York."

Somehow the subject of picture postcards did not occur to either. They studied each other quite happily for a space without speaking. Trenton was assured that in some vague way he had done a very clever and commendable thing, and Chichine—well, this was the occasion, as I said, when Chichine began to take life seriously.

The orchestra up in the end of the gallery had just finished playing the "Mascara," latest of those amazing dance tunes that periodically lead all Paris by the ears. On the wide yellow floor the dancers swarmed below the pale young conductor and emitted wild ejaculations in which the command "*Bis!*" was barely distinguishable. Thus unmistakably informed that he must play the tune again or be mobbed, the conductor shook his mane and led his men to the attack with a wave of his delicate wand that drew a preliminary crash from the drums and cymbals. The "Mascara," you know, is like the "Machiche," and in those days before the "turkey trot" it was considered strictly improper and diverting. The tourists in the gallery boxes grinned appreciatively as the floor became once more magically carpeted with dancers. Others on the floor joyously resumed their efforts to master the step.

"Like pretty little camels," said Chichine, and Trenton smiled with a superiority born of her careful coaching.

He found the new tune very infectious, and was vastly amused by the motley crowd of students and models and *midinettes* and foreigners who danced to it. Other factors that contributed to his immediate and overflowing happiness were the expressions of Chichine's late partner, who watched them from the buffet as if he had a very severe pain in the joint of his nose, and the realization that Chichine, too small to be handsome and too lively to be classic, was nevertheless the most piquantly attractive girl on the floor. Her costume still appeared to him to be perfectly outrageous, with its fringed depending points that pretended to be a skirt and its corsage built high on one shoulder and peeled far down the other, as if she were a sort of fruit with a skin of black satin. But her own sublime unconsciousness of any inadequacy made it difficult to open a discussion, and when in the first flush of surprise he had done so, Chichine had promptly reminded him that she was "artiste," and as such might legitimately wear what she chose.

She had quite remarkable eyes, too, that shone out of their thick black lashes with the light of chased silver under translucent enamel, and Trenton was presently unable to look at anything else; so that as they swept past the spectators on the promenade he said for the second time, "I love you, Chichine."

"Well understood," said Chichine. "For as long, perhaps, as a whole month. I do not forbid you, *mon petit homme!*"

She called him "little man," partly because he was above medium height and broad-shouldered at that, but mainly because it expressed the maternal attitude which French women, as soon as they are out of school, adopt to all mankind—the tone of a wise and indulgent mother to an amiable but potentially naughty little boy. Trenton dimly resented the assumption that he did not know his own mind. It was the only subject on which he had ever passed examinations.

"I will love you as long as I live, Chichine," he persisted.

"That is a form of pretty compliment here," said the girl, averting her eyes. "Presently you go away again, and if one reminds you of the Rigolo you say, 'Oh, yes, I think perhaps I did go there once. Such a vulgar box!' And you think to yourself, 'How fond I was of the little Chichine! Without doubt I should be more careful.' Possibly you do not even think of me at all." And she showed her white little teeth in a laugh that was not entirely mirthful.

"It is not like you to be unkind," said Trenton reproachfully. He had not permitted himself to describe the Rigolo as a vulgar box while it contained Chichine; but he had certainly stolen away from the hotel without troubling to tell his companion that he was going there. Chichine, with a hand on his sleeve, felt the muscles underneath quiver when she looked at him again. She knew that quiver, and her power to awaken it in all sorts of men, hitherto employed as an instrument of amusing psychological experiment, began to frighten her.

"Listen, *petit homme*," she said; "when men tell me those things I do not believe. While they are here, with the lights and music and confetti, they say I am adorable—*délicieuse*—all sorts of things. But next day, when they have perhaps the headache, it would seem that after all I am only little Chichine of the Rigolo—vulgar box, that!—and one raises one's shoulders, so, and wonders if one was not a very big fool last night. For of course *Messieurs les Américains* dare not fall in love at the Bal Rigolo. What would they say in Connecticut?"

"I do not care what people say," Trenton insisted with considerable truth. "Moreover, I live in New York, which is five thousand miles from Connecticut."

Chichine opened her eyes wide at the magnificent distances of America. True Parisienne, the world beyond Paris pictured itself to her as featureless landscape, and she would have been merely interested if Trenton had told her that

the scar of a grizzly's claw on his cheek had been gained in Harlem.

"*N'importe*. It amuses you to consider that you are in love, my Harry. I am vain enough to be flattered, but I am not foolish enough to believe. Now poor Diego there really loves me. When he sees that I prefer anyone else he suffers."

She pointed to the Spaniard who appeared with her in her dances in the intervals. He was a melancholy youth in the embroidered jacket and incredibly tight trousers of the Gitano dancer. His eyebrows grew together above his nose, and his face looked blue where he shaved. He was leaning against a corner of the stage and watching Trenton with an undisguised scowl. A striking brunette in orange silk clung to his shoulder unnoticed.

"Diego is angry because you have come back to see me," said Chichine. "And poor Margot la Brune is jealous of Diego because Diego is jealous of me." She laughed again a little more happily as they swept round with the undulating crowd.

"It is always so," moralized Chichine. "The person that you love does not love you, but another, who on his part loves someone else. That is life, is it not, *mon ami*?"

"Baby! What do you know about life?" smiled Trenton. And there for the moment the matter rested.

When they retired to their box in order that Chichine might regain her breath before the interval, Trenton returned to his fixed idea. He had the curious exhilaration that comes to a daring swimmer through the sunlit waves of dangerous waters. Chichine's loveliness dazzled him like a light. Her black curls, her gleaming black stockings, the deep black of her absurd costume sharply outlined by the yellow silk upholstery of the *loge*, all seemed by contrast to impart an electric radiance to her sparkling eyes and milk white shoulders.

In her new role of serious young person she argued with him.

"Listen, my Harry. You say that you love me, you also?"

"It is true," said Trenton. "Do I not know why I could not stay in New York?"

"You would like, then, to marry me?" said Chichine, lazily stretching herself on the yellow cushions.

Trenton started and stammered. The sudden incongruity of the idea astonished him like a cold douche. How could one marry a small dimpled person curled on cushions in the blaze and clamorous foolishness of the Bal Rigolo, with the whole of one Dresden china shoulder curving from a perversely oblique corsage? Besides, he had never thought of marriage except as people think about going to Heaven, or next year's Thanksgiving, or other events so far away as to be of small immediate importance. Perhaps what really startled him was to find Hymen, whom he had imagined to be many miles along the road ahead, actually lurking behind the next corner with a sandbag.

The next moment he realized that Chichine was laughing at him.

"Thou seest, *petit homme!* Figure to yourself that you are saying to your cousins in Amérique: 'I present to you my wife Chichine, who is a very shocking person and may not know what to do with the stones of her olives. Take care when I am away that she does not dance the *gitanette* on the table of the *cuisine* to amuse the gas man.' Now I must go, for in ten minutes I dance and my hairs are all untidy. You must wait for me?"

"A lifetime," said Trenton, recovering himself.

"*Blagueur!* If I am late so much as a quarter of an hour I shall find you dancing with Margot la Brune."

Trenton followed her slowly downstairs, and crossed the dancing floor filled with a sense of the newly discovered and catastrophic possibilities of the situation. "You would like to marry me, then?" But why wouldn't he? Or would he? And why in the name of sanity had the idea never occurred to him before?

A narrowly averted collision with an ecstatic French couple reminded him that he was in the way, and he made for

the promenade. The tables were crowded with men and women who chattered like sparrows. At the far end he had a momentary glimpse of Chichine's little black and white model of a figure as she threaded her way to the door leading to the back of the stage. He saw a man's hand reach out to seize her arm as she passed, and noticed the lithe, effortless movement by which she evaded it. The incident affected him with an indescribable pain. That movement had become a practised habit. Of course at the Rigolo one did as one pleased, and nothing was unpardonable but ill-temper. Still Trenton had a feeling of anxiety, as if the hand that darted forth from the crowded tables possessed some viperish quality. When someone clapped him on the shoulder from behind he started visibly.

"Delano!" he exclaimed. "What on earth brings you here?"

"It is for me to ask that of you," smiled the stout, gray-haired Chicagoan who had risen from an adjacent table. "Having left me to amuse myself, you must allow that I am entitled to choose the form of my amusement."

Trenton murmured apologies.

"Don't worry," said Delano, compressing his double chins amiably. "I knew Paris before you were born, and in any case I have found my old friend Per-tit, who knew it before I was born. Per-tit, this is Monsieur Harold Trenton, who ought to be my traveling companion and isn't."

Delano's friend rose, raised his hat and pulled back a chair for Trenton all in one courtly movement. His face was covered with tiny humorous wrinkles, and his black eye twinkled with the fire of unquenchable youth. His dark red cane, accurately inlaid with fretted silver, the white edging of his vest and the heavy ribbon of his eyeglass, alike conveyed a sense of the old *boulevardier*—now a little timeworn perhaps, but still distinctly *boulevardier*.

"I will now bury you under coals of fire by offering to take you with us," said Delano. "When he was younger, my friend Per-tit was premier comedian at the Folies Gayol. Now he is premier

courier in the whole of Paris, and all doors open to him. Where shall he lead us?"

"It is good of you," Trenton hesitated. "But I should like to remain here. I prefer the real Paris, even when it is not quite smart, to the gilded Midway of the guidebook."

"And you look for the real Paris under the colored lights of the Rigolo?" queried Delano, slyly.

"At least it is not a conscious spectacle," parried Trenton.

"Monsieur Trenton has an idea, at all events." The old guide hastened to the rescue. "He has realized that the true Parisian is neither notably gay nor conspicuously wicked, but stays at home, scrapes together his sous and minds his own business. But lest the visitor be disappointed, shows are provided. They are incidentally very profitable."

Delano was not to be thrown off the scent. He leaned forward with a plump hand on his young friend's knee.

"Come, confess!" he challenged. "What is it that you have found here?" Trenton stared at him, then at the many-colored crowd on the floor and the floating lamps and the streamers above.

"Upon my word of honor I don't rightly know, Delano," he said at last, and fell to whistling the "Mascara."

The music of the orchestra had ceased, and the dancers flocked to little tables or stood about in expectant groups. The Spaniard Diego hastened up the promenade to the stage, cursing like a cat under his breath as he brushed past Trenton. A moment later the music burst forth again in a lively tango that Trenton knew by heart.

"Now you will see for yourself what it is that I have found," he whispered to Delano. Chichine appeared, a vivid, vital spark in the center of the stage. There was a ripple of welcome on the floor. A stern critic might have said that her dancing was too facile ever to be really great. The crowds at the Rigolo, however, were more indulgent. What held them night after night was the sheer joy and beauty of life, the perfect poise of nerve and muscle that showed in every movement.

"I saw you look at her just now as if you would like to eat her," grinned Delano, when the old guide had gone to gossip with friends at another table. "Well, I expect there's a whole bunch who feel that way. She looks quite the candy to me."

They watched the graceful figure, like the rest of the spectators, silenced by the spell of her joyous youth, the glamour of her eyes and the smile that flashed at times like jewels as she turned. Diego, himself no mean dancer, was the merest foil to the triumphant little personality of Chichine. At the end, when she stood for a moment before the footlights, her shapely round arms extended, her small corsage heaving, her childish mouth parted in a delicious smile, Delano himself almost joined in the transports of the students on the floor. Even the women clapped their gloved hands.

"You seem to be in luck, you scamp," said Delano. "See that you don't let her turn your head completely."

Trenton leaned forward and tapped on the table with his fingers.

"What would you say," he asked mildly, "if I told you that she is the future Mrs. Harold Trenton?"

Delano's stout smile froze, and he replied with emphasis:

"Forget it, my boy!" he said, very coldly and distinctly through the hum of applause. "You can't possibly marry a girl from the Bal Rigolo." He got up and gesticulated like an inflated garment in the wind.

"And why not, please?" smiled Trenton.

Delano looked all round him for reasons, breathing hard, and his billowy gestures ended in a profound shrug of voluptuous shoulders.

"You terrify me," he said. "I will go and take Pertit to supper at the Pousset. Why, because it's—they don't—well, you simply can't do it, you know!"

When he had gone Trenton suddenly brought his fist down on the table, and permitted himself the rare extravagance of an oath.

"The hell I can't!" said Trenton.

He watched Delano steer the aged Pertit through the exit doors, an expres-

sion of outraged propriety remaining even in the place where his friend's shoulder blades were hidden. Trenton recalled the elder man's unfortunate matrimonial history and became sympathetic.

"Poor old fellow!" he said. "That's all he knows about it."

Five minutes later he sat in the yellow box again, and looked gravely into Chichine's eyes, that still sparkled with the pleasure of successful effort. Her argumentative mood had given place to one of shy curiosity. She ran a rosy fingertip over the scar on his hard brown cheek, and made him smile so that she might see his big square teeth, and once she lightly stroked the crisp mat of his tawny hair. It was apparent that she extracted an appropriate thrill from each. Somehow Trenton felt that this was a waste of time.

"Look at me, *ma petite*," he said. "Do you think I am in my sober senses?"

"But yes, *petit homme*, since you ask me."

"Then I want you," proceeded Trenton calmly, "to marry me. Will you marry me, Chichine?" The girl drew away from him quickly and her eyes wandered to the door.

"You know that it is impossible. I am an artiste, and I shall never marry anybody."

"It is not impossible," replied Trenton. "You have brains, and I am not altogether a fool. Nothing is therefore impossible."

"It is time for me to go home," said Chichine, rising. "I must change my dress."

Trenton's hand shot out and closed over her slim, jeweled wrist.

"You must do nothing of the kind. I want to know whether you will marry me."

"No!" said Chichine, struggling to escape. "No, I will not be so foolish! Please let me go!"

"Then I give you notice that I will marry you," said Trenton. "So that settles it."

"How cruel you are!" said Chichine. "Let me go!"

Her lip quivered, and the animation

died suddenly out of her face. When Trenton released her she sank on the cushions of the *loge*, burying her face in them. The glamour of her radiant vitality had departed. As he watched her in dismay her shoulder heaved convulsively, and she seemed to pale into a mere slip of distressed girlhood—very human, very weary and very much in need of protection. It had never occurred to him that her apparently tireless little frame had its limitations. Gently he raised her and sought to soothe her overwrought nerves.

"Don't you see, my Harry, how cruel it is?" she said. "I am happy here, I am content to work hard and to hope that some day I shall be successful, for I love to dance. Now you are trying to make me want something else instead, so that presently when you go away I shall be left with nothing at all."

"I am not going to leave you," insisted Trenton.

"Do you know how many men have said the same things, and I have never seen them again? How can I believe what a man says here? I laugh, because I do not care for them, and I think always of my work."

"Then why did you cry just now?" demanded Trenton softly, and waited for the shot to strike home.

"Oh, I do not know," replied Chichine, brushing back the black fringe from her forehead with a gasp of fatigue. "Perhaps it is—it is possible that I do love you, for you are making me hate this place, making me afraid of my ambitions. Yes, I begin to detest even my dresses since you said they were not nice. And all to pass the time because you are bored. *Petit homme*, do let me be happy!"

Her pleading face was very close to his. Filled with the helpless pity one feels for a suffering child, Trenton turned away lest the temptation to seize her in his arms and convince her by main force that he was in earnest should overcome him. Suddenly he felt her soft white arms about his neck, and she was covering his cheek with kisses.

"Canst thou not see? Must I tell thee a secret, *mon ami*?" She was whispering

rapidly. "Already I hate the Rigolo, I like no longer the people who come here. I think of things so much better—and I am afraid. Oh, I don't want to be an artiste any more! I would rather be thy wife, Harry *chéri*, than the greatest artiste in the entire world! Now thou seest how cruel it is to talk to me, Chichine, of marrying."

Trenton would have held her, but in one swift movement she had placed the table between them and gained the door. She turned back for a moment with her hand on the latch, a tear still gleaming on her black lashes.

"Do you seriously imagine that I shall ever drop the subject now you have said that?" asked Trenton.

"I have let other men kiss me," said Chichine.

"Wicked Chichine! Did you by chance kiss them in return?"

"I would have done so if I had thought of it. Tomorrow when you reflect you will see that it must be so, and you will come no more. Tonight you are merely foolish because—because it is night, at the Rigolo for instance, and you think I am pretty. *Voilà tout!*"

"No," said Trenton. "Tomorrow you will still be pretty, Chichine, and for the rest I will see that you never kiss anyone else, even if you should happen to think of it."

"We shall see what we shall see," said Chichine, and was gone.

"We shall see another impossibility accomplished," Trenton said, as he settled down to wait for her. The hard and fast line of French middle class convention, he knew, had been crossed by Chichine on the first night she had danced at the Bal Rigolo. He realized that she was trying to make this clear to him, and that she had no doubt that pretty soon he would look upon it the same way, and vanish like the rest of the numerous admirers to whom she was merely a pleasant vacation memory. But he was so happily confident that she was mistaken that it was some minutes before he became aware of an unusual commotion on the floor and rose to look over the rail of the gallery.

A crowd had gathered, and in the cen-

ter of it stood Chichine and the Spaniard Diego. The Gitano dancer was holding her by the wrist. His black eyebrows were contracted in anger, and Trenton could see that he was talking rapidly and vehemently. A knot of students stopped dancing to interfere in defense of their idol, and one of them, who wore a leopard skin, thrust a truculent face into the Spaniard's and jerked him sharply forward by the sleeve. Trenton knew this to be a recognized fighting signal in the Quarter. Before he could draw a breath, one of the swift, violent scenes achieved only by the Latin temperament was in progress. While the students hustled the Spaniard, the girl in orange silk who was known as Margot la Brune pushed her way through the crowd. Her face was set in determined hatred. In her hand Trenton saw the gleam of a glass bottle, and the excited group in the center suddenly dissolved and scattered before her as if it were an infernal machine. He saw Chichine left cowering alone at the foot of the gilded staircase, her hands seeking to protect her averted face. In a bound he reached the door of the box. It would not open.

At the moment he raised his heel and smashed the flimsy French lock there rose to his ears sounds of fear and anger, and then a cry of pain that goaded him like a stab. Before him a small stout Frenchman pounded along the corridor with his hands held up to his chest, screaming "*Une vitrioleuse!*" Trenton overtook and passed him with a rush that hurled him to the floor. But it was too late. By the time he had forced his way through the crowd of spectators craning their necks on the staircase there was no trace of the Spaniard or of Margot la Brune. Chichine was not visible, and uniformed janitors were thrusting the students from the floor. One student, dressed as a satyr, showed fight and was instantaneously ejected. Then Trenton, vainly seeking information from the chatter around him, caught sight of another uniformed janitor, a great broad-shouldered man in blue, carrying bodily through the door that led to the stage the form of a girl in black. Her white face and shoulder were

streaked with a horrible violet stain. A silken limb projected, the tiny satin shoe seeming to quiver in agony. And the door closed behind them.

The men in uniform, red in the face and dictatorial from their collision with the students, would tell him nothing. They appeared anxious, indeed, for an opportunity to eject someone else. Trenton found himself at length in the foyer, where a properly bearded, silk-hatted and shirt-fronted functionary was debating with the satyr and his unruly friends. Trenton assailed him with questions. The functionary thrust forward his chin, shook his clenched fist and hissed virulently:

"I have once more the honor to inform messieurs our distinguished patrons that mademoiselle is not here!" he said. Perceiving that Trenton had some motive beyond curiosity, he added more moderately:

"She has departed in a taxi auto. I do not know where."

Wandering aimlessly into the street, a prey to warring emotions, Trenton wondered bitterly why he had never felt sufficient curiosity to ask Chichine where she lived; had never, in fact, thought of her as existing apart from the Rigolo. For one dark moment it seemed to him that Delano and Chichine were in the right, and that he was wrong. One simply could not do it!

Then a vision of a tortured white face and a foot that quivered in agony took hold of him and thrust him into the nearest taxi, and he knew what he had to do. He went to various hospitals and similar places, where—as it was Saturday night—he was informed by *concierges* of numerous cases of violence, "*dramas passionnels*," in which some of these people took a certain pride. But he did not find Chichine.

While Delano was frowning in loneliness over scrawpily tantalizing "news" from New York in next morning's paper, Trenton entered and flung himself into a chair with a movement of utter exhaustion.

"Well," said Delano pleasantly, "how about the little Chichine?"

Trenton buried his face wearily in his hands.

"I can't find her," he said dully.

"Well, if you are wise you'll pass her up and take the first train with me to Trouville. You can't get your mental balance till you do. Good Lord, man, what's the trouble now?"

Trenton had sprung up with a violent exclamation and seized him by the shoulder in a grip that made him wince. Looking up from his newspaper in alarm, Delano saw that his friend's hair was unkempt and his eyes heavy with sleeplessness.

"Are you so badly hit, old man?" said Delano. "I'm sorry I said that—I didn't know."

"They threw vitriol on her last night, that poor pretty little thing!" said Trenton, sinking back into his chair. "Some jealous fiend of a woman! This morning the police deny that it ever happened, though I saw it with my own eyes. Delano, you must help me to find her!"

"But I don't quite see what you can do even if you do find her," objected Delano.

"Do? Man alive, I'm going to *marry* her! For the love of heaven, get that solid. I told her before it happened, and I'm going to find her and tell her the same now. Oh, I know what you are thinking. I've thought of all of that, more shame to me! But I tell you, Delano, you're wrong. I've got to do just what I'm doing."

He stopped suddenly and leaned forward.

"Old man, you got your divorce when I was a little tyke at school, and you told me you had married in your own set. Could you tell me now the name of the woman you *ought* to have married?"

"Why, I guess—yes," stammered the elder man.

"Of course you can! And so can any man who is old and gray and lonely; most all of them can tell you that when it's too late."

"That's a different story," Delano grumbled.

"Yes, it isn't going to be mine. I've found her; and blind or scarred, ugly as

sin or light as froth, I'm going to stick to her. And you've got to help me."

"It may not be so bad, after all," said Delano, reaching for his hat with sudden alacrity. "As to finding her, that's easy. Old Pertit knows all about her."

They ran the aged guide to earth in a bright, cosy little apartment in the Rue Bréa.

"My friend Trenton wants your help, Pertit," explained Delano. "It seems that owing to some unfortunate—er—accident he has lost trace of the little Chichine. From something you said last night I have hoped that you could assist."

"Monsieur refers to the affair of the vitriol?" The old man's face puckered into multitudinous wrinkles as he turned his bright black eyes on Trenton. "It was at the Bal Rigolo, no doubt, that she disappeared?"

"Then you know her?" Trenton shot the question at him almost joyfully.

"As well, I hope, as a man may know his own niece, who has kept house for him since she was so high as that table. If monsieur will have the goodness to follow me very quietly, and to say nothing, he may see her."

They followed him softly into the little corridor of the flat. As the guide gently parted the curtains that were draped across it, Trenton and his friend saw that it terminated in a box of a kitchen, bright with sunlight on its checkered linoleum and snowy boards. And there moved quickly across the open door Chichine, and her face was streaked with—

Just here, dear sentimental or cynical reader, as the case may be, who may have pictured Trenton romantically vowing fidelity to a maimed and disfigured Chichine—right here is where you must be disappointed. There was nothing on Chichine's face more harmful than flour.

Groans! But the interests of truth are paramount. And the truth is that there was flour also upon the hair of Chichine, upon the bare dimpled arms of Chichine, flour on the gleaming gas cooker, flour upon the fat black back of the cat that besought her for minced

meats. For with characteristic energy Chichine was making a *vol-au-vent*.

Trenton committed the shocking breach of manners of rushing into the kitchen without waiting for permission. Delano and the guide, about to follow, heard a confused gasp and an impatient voice that said:

"*Méchant!* Have I not already told thee that I am too busy—"

And then a cry of "*Petit homme!*"

"They don't want us, anyhow," said Delano, and pulled his friend back into the sitting room. "But look here; Trenton was most positive that he saw vitriol thrown. How about it?"

"A mere spectacle!" The old guide's wrinkles sprang to life again. "A mere *réclame*, of a kind that is often used to send the visitor away to supper with an extra thrill, and to bring more visitors in search of them. Though from all I can hear it had the defect last night of being too convincing, so that even our friends the students, who should have known better, were deceived. The poor Diego had to flee from a beating!"

"Why do you let your niece dance at that place?" asked Delano. The guide spread his hands, and gazed upon his friend with a quizzical expression.

"Let her, you say? Why does a man let a woman who is willful and wheedling, and moreover an excellent housekeeper, follow the desire of her heart?"

"Besides," he added, drawing himself up with an effort, "how can I, former premier comedian of the Folies Gayol, stifle the call of art in another? In Paris, monsieur, the artiste may properly be anywhere, and one must begin at the beginning. Again, though I was once premier comedian absolutely at the Folies Gayol, I am now but poor *courrier-interprète*. In Paris one scrapes sous! And Chichine had the ambition to study under Katti Kanner."

The blue-veined hand of Monsieur Pertit trembled a little as he offered wine to his guests.

"It seems," he added, "that Chichine kept your friend a little in the dark for some purpose of her own. I have noticed—many things—since six weeks. Well, I am an old man!"

GRANDMOTHER AND GERALDINE

By Terrell Love Holliday

"IN my day," mused Grandmother, as she and Geraldine, lounging upon the country club veranda, contemplated a bevy of clear-eyed, long-limbed, deep-bosomed young matrons animatedly discussing their golf scores, "a woman considered it almost indelicate to admit that she enjoyed perfect health. In fact she didn't really enjoy it—she was out of style."

"Since then," laughed Geraldine, "she has learned that it is impolitic to enjoy the imperfect kind, and if she is bluffing and doesn't actually enjoy it—she is soon out of a job. The girl who works must be Daisy-at-the-desk six days in the week or a new bud will bloom in her place."

"Riding cross-seat and the ability to swing a golf club with piledriver force, we should have thought unwomanly," declared the old lady.

"We had to do those things," defended Geraldine, "to keep the poor fellows who make saddles and golf balls from starving. The men came to prefer hobbies and easy chairs to horses, and highballs to golf balls."

"We appealed to the chivalry, the protective instinct of man," said Grandmother.

"The appeal of the most picturesque beggar loses its effectiveness at the second or third 'touch,'" philosophized the young woman, "but a highwayman could get your money a hundred times by exactly the same methods."

"It used to be a fad with women to have some kind of a disease—a weak heart, a frail constitution, sick headache or something of the sort. A woman thought it made her interesting. If the malady had been handed down for several generations, it was her most precious heirloom; while if it happened to be rare and reputedly fatal, she was a heroine."

"I suppose," said Geraldine, "that when women obeyed the Biblical injunction to 'cast out the devils,' the disembodied spirits had to have a home, so they took up their abode in men. Every man I know has a pet ailment of some kind which he doctors and discusses continually. One has such wretched nerves that a cup of coffee would upset him for days; another imagines that he hasn't slept a wink for years. Really, they are quite pitiful."

"I should think such delicate men would be afraid of these big, strong, fearless, domineering women," opined Grandmother.

"They are—a very wholesome condition, in my opinion," asserted Geraldine.

"Then why do the men marry them?" wondered Grandmother.

"Sometimes," said Geraldine, "it is the case of the cave man and his kidnaped bride—reversed; but generally it is because the man needs a nurse."

"But why do the women marry? I shouldn't call such men attractive."

"They're not," acknowledged Geraldine, "but a woman must have something to mother, and she isn't always satisfied with a poodle."

"Once," sighed Grandmother sadly, "I thought man was 'the noblest work of God.'"

"Oh," replied Geraldine quickly, "he was for a few minutes—while Eve was receiving the finishing touches."

PLEASANT PROCRASTINATION

By Lucy Elliot Keeler

WHENEVER we try to fathom the problems of life we find ourselves confronted by contradictory propositions. Ancestral trend has perhaps made us violent partisans and practitioners of some platitudinous habit—until one illuminating experiment after another leaves us surprised, weakened and heretical. Time only is needed to bring in ample revenge and the backward swing of the pendulum.

Now heredity and early training made of me a prodigy of promptness, and I plumed myself on the fact that for me nobody ever had to wait. It was disconcerting, therefore, to discover that Suzette, who keeps everybody waiting, reaps the rewards that rightfully should enrich virtue. While my coachman merely slams the door on my celerity, Suzette's, overjoyed to see her at last, springs to her service; and as a dilatory guest who breaks the monotony of ten o'clock she is far more eagerly welcomed than I who arrive at the appointed hour. At church services, where I precede the processional, I am always bestowed well forward, rear pews being reserved for late comers who might otherwise disturb the worship. Suzette always occupies a rear pew, though at lectures and concerts a comfortable chair from the directors' room is frequently brought for her and placed in a position *de luxe*, all regular seats having been filled by the prompt. Are theater tickets desired, I stand for hours in line. Suzette drops in, throws up coy, despairing hands at the long *queue*, trips to the front, taps some amiable lad on the shoulder, gives her commission as a favor, and sallies forth incontinently to her shopping.

Almost bursting with gratitude over

my Christmas gifts, I used to begin writing my thanks before the day was well over. Suzette from her easy chair would say: "Oh, are you writing to William? Then I will just put in a word;" and so my elaborate letter of thanks for perchance a postcard includes four lines from Suzette acknowledging a handsome gift, the envelope being naturally furnished, addressed and stamped by myself. "Angela writes such good letters," Suzette scribbles, "that I leave her the pleasure of describing our Christmas here." In all matters epistolary, Suzette believes with Napoleon that a fortnight answers more letters than she can. To reply to all correspondents promptly was my practice, until I was stunned into silence by the ingenuous exclamation of a little relative: "Answer Cousin Angela right away? But then another letter will come, and another!"

How often, waking in the night, have I thought earnestly of a long silent friend, impatient for morning that I might write to her! The day after that letter was despatched one would arrive from my friend, so full of questions that courtesy compelled a second letter, which again went unanswered till I restarted the ball. Now, in new enlightenment, when I "think hard" of a person I conclude that person is "thinking hard" of me; and avoiding crossed letters, I await her inevitable word.

A letter once written, my former practice was to seal and stamp it immediately. How often have such envelopes been cut open and the stamp soaked off that I might enclose some forgotten enclosure, answer some neglected question or add some important postscript! A

letter hurried to the mailbox is generally wished back for a more accurate address, or to correct some misspelled word which just too late peers at me from a newspaper. Letters expressing my hurt feelings, my irritation, my "own idea," written and filed in my desk, are sure to be posted in the grate or wastebasket—with a laugh. Tattycorum's count of one hundred before speaking was a like procrastination on the ethical side.

There was a heavy snowstorm one night, and our man being ill and odd job men scarce as flies at Christmas, I hurried out of bed, dressed and myself cleaned the long front walk. Wearied and breathless, I had just finished when the city snowplough came along, and the driver, with a cheerful, "Great fun, isn't it?" cleared the walks of my sleeping, irresponsible neighbors. A summer experience concerned a dying maple near the curb. After much difficulty I secured an expensive man, who devoted a leisurely day to the work of felling, and a drayman who hauled away the brush. Less than a week later a squad of men sent by the city forester found black-knot on a neighboring tree—the one from which my maple had been infected—and removed it expeditiously and gratuitously. By such experiences do I rise on the stepping stones of my dead self.

In novel reading I sing the praise of procrastination. This policy followed, how many of the best sellers would ever be read at all? "Vanity Fair," alas, was spoiled for me forever by being nibbled too soon. To the optimism and inexperience of a girl of seventeen the book was incomprehensible and revolting. On the other hand, "War and Peace," in all its length and breadth, overlooked for many years, proved of entrancing interest in a great crisis of life, invoking trains of thought long dormant, classifying the debris of fact and fancy that littered my mental garret and marshaling them into orderly effective ranks. Richard Baxter knew human nature when he said that nothing so hindereth the reception of truth as urging it on men with too harsh importunity. "Do thou but hold thy tongue for one day,"

cautioned Carlyle, "and on the morrow how much clearer are thy purposes and duties;" and we all recall with Thackeray moments in our lives when it would have been so much wiser and wittier to do and say nothing. Orientals shun the men who are forever itching to be doing something, who cannot wait. The canny Russian general Kutuzof, deprecating pursuit, insisted that it was only necessary to give the retreating French army the "golden bridge"—that is, every facility to destroy itself on the march out of Russia. "*Savoir attendre est salutaire*," is the Frenchman's own way of putting it. Malherbe, to be sure, overworked the national proverb. He wished to console a friend on the death of his wife. The gentleman had been consoled, remarried and was himself dead before the poem was finished.

At the hands of overstocked editors the impatient contributor has opportunities to practise the motto, "Serene I fold my hands and wait." Dr. Edward Eggleston told a friend that just before the Civil War he had gone with a scientific expedition into the Northwest, with a scout who pushed the cart. Eggleston's first literary venture, "The Man That Draws the Handcart," was sent to a well known magazine and accepted by the editor and one hundred dollars paid the author. After twelve years Eggleston suggested that the article be revised. It was returned to him for that purpose, rewritten, and another hundred dollars forwarded to him. Eighteen years later it was published. The magazine had lost nothing by thirty years' procrastination, during which Dr. Eggleston's fame had become established.

Lowell's belief that "merely to bask and ripen is sometimes the student's wiser business," applies to the rejected manuscript put back into the author's desolation box, to be revised in the light of later life and experience. Professor Church while at Oxford entered the competition for the best poem on a sacred subject, but failed to finish it. Ten years later, when the subject was the Lake of Tiberius, he completed the poem and sent it in, unfortunately a month too late. Fifteen years later the same sub-

ject was set again, being this time the Sea of Galilee. Church revised his poem, added a few stanzas and won the prize, hoping that it was not undeserved. Thus is success often fain to smile upon effort that has been well postponed.

A certain friendship gave me such pleasure that I expressed regret for its postponement till middle life. Yet its dominant charm was its late fruition, deferred to a lapse in vitality, coming to fill a great gap and renew youthful enthusiasm. In middle life we discover that people count for more than books or things, and that with all eternity before us we may well postpone many a mundane job rather than begrudge a little time to our friends. On the other hand, the readiness of older persons to avoid the vicarious trouble of new ties is humorously expressed in Emerson's plaint: "Whom God hath put asunder, why should men bring together?"

Thus year by year I have been a growing convert to the comfortable sect of procrastinators. Last spring I pined for Italy, and after a frenzied search in distant States and other lands for a qualified companion, I settled back on my heels, to find that my nearest and dearest neighbor had only to be asked to accompany me gladly. Perhaps the culminating *coup* in my conversion occurred last Christmas, when, urged to desperation by posters and preachers and publicity, I finished my shopping, had all my gifts wrapped, sealed, stamped, return-addressed and mailed a week before the eventful day. I recall vividly the idleness and lonesomeness of that week. All the world but me was scurrying around happily; the shops were gay and bustling; nobody had time to visit or talk with me. What a contrast to the thrilling earlier years when, weary but jubilant, I had sat up till one o'clock to finish some trinket, surreptitiously stitched during church hour the Sunday before, and vaulted out of bed in the dark of Christmas morning to fill the last stocking and hang the last festoon!

Except for mortgaging another por-

tion of the little time left us for individual life, I should like to found a "Don't Hurry Club," under Isaiah's motto, "He that believeth shall not make haste." In its folds scurrying mortals should learn the folly of making important decisions when tired; of starting out at a physical or mental pace they cannot improve upon; of plucking apples while green, prematurely spoiling thereby both the apple and the branch and setting one's teeth on edge. Members of the Don't Hurry Club would refuse to be mobbed in spirit by collections of duties simple enough when taken singly; they would discover the advantage of waiting—the valuable truth that one by one we tide over our impatiences; that to press the minutes and always improve the time is infelicitous; that many of the hard knots of our experience have a way of loosening of their own accord if we will but just wait, do nothing, dismiss the whole subject from the mind. Lincoln knew, when he declared that nothing could be lost by taking time. The Harvard freshmen knew when, with the insouciance of youth, their banner announced to the world that the university had been waiting two hundred and fifty years for them. Durandarte in the cave of Montesino knew when, all luck against him, he cried, "Patience, and shuffle the cards!" Their apothegms are but Spencer's profound exposition of life as the continuous adjustment of inner relations to outer relations. We cannot hustle the east, nor the setting sun, nor the swing of the Dipper around the North Star; but we can refuse to "be conquered by these headlong days;" to fret, "like idle girls, that life is dashed with flecks of sin." We may keep our minds at brood on life's deep meaning; we can learn from the lark

... to rise and wait
In the sunshine at His gate,

and from Hugo's bird,

... a moment lighted
Upon a twig that swings;
He feels it sway, but sings on unaffrighted,
Knowing he hath his wings.

VOICES OF THE FOREST

By Phoebe Dana Kellogg

THE myriad voices of the forest call,
Holding my wakened soul their willing thrall.

Soughing winds pass through the pine tops,
Whispering low their mysterious secrets.
Murmurous brooks thread their winding way
Through sylvan glade and the open.
Plaintive notes, from the throat of the nightingale,
Rise and fall in the twilight.
Tiny branches crackle and drop,
Quivering the silence around me.
The busy buzzing of the passing bees,
Lure on to search for hidden sweetness.
Sun-tipped butterflies touch my cheek lightly,
Heedless of their ephemeral existence.
Premature leaves, loosed from the parent stem,
Swirl in midair ere descending.
Defiant squirrels approach,
Disputing with me their dominion.
Every sound teems with mystery
And incomprehensible creation.

The myriad voices of the forest call,
Holding my wakened soul their willing thrall.



MISS YELLOWLEAF—No punishment is too great for a man who becomes
engaged to two girls at once.
CYNICUS—That's right. He ought to be made to marry 'em both.



WISE men long ago decided that you never could tell what a woman would
do, and fools have been finding it out ever since.

THE SIGN AT THE DOOR

By Michael White

“I GUESS this is going to be our last night, boys,” Foster announced seriously, but otherwise without emotion. “It looks as if those savages outside have got large reinforcements, and are about ready to rush the rotten old walls.”

“How soon?” questioned a voice tensely.

“Before sunrise tomorrow, you can bet your boots on that,” affirmed Foster. “I went to the Governor to suggest combining forces and defending that old block tower over the East Gate—it seems in pretty good condition—but the old fool was crying and whimpering like a scared baby. And his soldiers are not much better. Maybe it’s just as well to rely on ourselves and do without them.”

A handful of white men had come together in serious conference at a place called Shang-Su, somewhere up near the source of the Hoang-Ho River. Their plight was fairly desperate. The town in which they made their trade headquarters had been enveloped by a horde of revengeful Mongols, bent on plunder and slaughter. These made no secret of their design. In response to an appeal from the Imperial Governor, the Mongols curtly returned that, surrender or not, they would spare neither man, woman nor child, native or foreigner. This was in return for similar acts committed when the other side possessed the stronger hand. Commanding the besiegers was a man whose name signified terror. In his veins was perhaps a drop or two of the blood of Timur, enough to lay whole provinces waste with ruthless sword and torch.

As to the white men, they had received a mysterious warning of that which had

now come to pass long before the Imperial Governor. At first they gave little heed to it, but a second and third sign decided them to send their families out of the region of danger. With considerable anxiety they bade farewell to those for whom they chiefly feared, watching them set forth across the vast arid plain of the interior. But again the same friendly agent manifested itself. Letters received told of a band of armed horsemen that had suddenly enclosed the little caravan as with a protecting cloud, and escorted it to a point of safety. For this the white men in Shang-Su were both devoutly thankful and puzzled. Now, as it was clear that little resistance and no protection could be anticipated from the panic-stricken soldiery of the Governor—himself a shrinking old man given over to the worst fears—they had gathered to decide on a plan, since escape was placed beyond question. Previously they had formed a fraternal lodge of ancient repute and world-wide celebrity. While Foster, an American, presided, Lacey, an Englishman, and Goltz, a German, occupied the next important offices. Among the rest of the brothers several nationalities were represented. Their meeting place was a small hall with a vestibule, formerly part of an abandoned temple. Its upcurved roof corners suggested the willow pattern design on old blue porcelain, but it was strongly built of stone and stout timbers. A surrounding court held back a press of squalid dwellings, and the mystery in which the white men had unintentionally enveloped it restrained the too eager curiosity of the populace. It was whispered that black magic went on in that abode of

strange silence at hours when people usually slept, so for the most part the place was carefully avoided. But its strength had impressed Foster as their best retreat, capable of enabling them to put up a stiff fight. For all that, his clean cut features were rather grimly set on returning from a lookout point to report the latest news. The others crowded around with eager, tense faces, having bestowed on him the onerous post of leader.

"I made nearly a whole circuit of the walls, and climbed the block tower over the East Gate," Foster gave further information. "The Mongols have pitched their camp on the ridge to the south. There's one big shawl pattern tent with banners and streamers fluttering. Fine bit of color against the turquoise sky in the bright sunshine. Guess that must be Firoz Khan's headquarters. He's got guns posted there, and the plain is swarming with horsemen. Detachments of them are pacing around the city, heaping ridicule on our valiant defenders. As well they may. Where all that swarm came from, heaven knows, but up the cut in the rock hills to the east I could see more pennons on the march. Looks as if all Mongolia and Turkestan had decided that Shang-Su was the richest loot on earth."

"What are our people doing?" questioned Lacey.

"Our people! You mean the soldiers? What could they do with wooden bullets and cartridges filled with sand? It's probable our precious Governor is sorry now he didn't thieve on something else than his soldier's ammunition. On coming back through the bazaar," went on Foster, "it was like a deserted city. Where all our people have hidden is as much a puzzle as where the others came from."

"Well, what do you suggest?" asked Lacey.

"I'll tell you," said Foster. "I propose we barricade the lodge room. We'll collect there what ammunition we have and some provisions. I guess, though, we won't need much of the latter before it's all over. Anyway, we'll hold a lodge in solemn form, as if it were

a Grand Visitation. We'll go through with it word perfect. Then we'll see how many of those darned fiends we can put out of business, before—they get us."

The plan was agreed to unanimously, each man hastening to follow Foster's instructions. Thus when night fell they had gathered in the lodge hall, with door and windows stoutly fortified. Loop-holes had been left to fire through, and the surrounding court cleared of accumulated debris so as to eliminate shelter for an advancing enemy. Foster assigned to each his post for that final hour in which lay the test of courage. He then opened the lodge according to the rite of the brotherhood. It was a striking, almost fantastic scene, illuminated dimly by suspended bronze lamps of curious antique patterns. From a carved and gilded frieze peered down the faces of strange grotesque deities. On one side the Worshipful Master's chair had displaced a sinister image, while above hung the cipher of the highest ideal. Opposite, the English Senior Warden's back was turned indifferently upon a relic of other things in the form of a huge inset graven panel displaying a particularly savage dragon. Brother Herman Goltz sat stolidly eying a perch on a lacquered beam where it joined the wall opposite. To this he hoped to climb and do some effective sharpshooting. The brothers on either side faced each other. Their thoughts flew to distant scenes. While Foster addressed the lodge, before him rose the vision of a girl's figure, halting on the threshold of the Pacific at San Francisco for word from him to come on to a union at one of the treaty ports. Would she hear how he had stood by his own kind and faced the peril in Shang-Su? Would she remember—for a little while? He hoped so. For the most part the others were thankful their families had reached a place of safety, though Brother Herman Goltz, formerly of the Uhlans, regretted the necessity of being cooped up on the defensive instead of cutting their way out straight for the tent of Firoz Khan.

"So," he demonstrated with his gavel to a brother seated nearby. "Over the horse's head, then downward with a big

sweep. If you have a strong grip, you catch two of those fellows, and there is another waiting for the thrust. To reach that Mongol barbarian, Firoz Khan, *ach*, I would give—"

He was interrupted by the Worshipful Master calling him from the Uhlan saber manual to that of Shang-Su Lodge. While the secret session thus calmly proceeded, upon the city descended, as it were, a pall of advancing doom. No sound at all smote upon the ears of the assembled brothers. The very dogs that howled through the night in response to the defiant challenge of their wild kindred outside the city had apparently sought holes and corners of refuge. The usual routine of life had halted on the threshold of a calamity. Of what purpose to cook food or prepare for the morrow, when any hour might be the last so far as this existence was concerned? Why do anything—but wait? The greater part of the populace sat dumb, motionless, expectant and keenly sensitive to any strange sound. That came a little before midnight. A roll of drums accompanied by wild shouts rose and swept on toward the city. It grew more voluminous and sinister every minute. It fell upon the city from all sides as the onrush of a hurricane, and was echoed by despairing cries from every hut and hovel of the beleaguered, merging into a prolonged wail. It reached the ears of the brothers at their work in the temple hall. On them it produced merely an exchange of significant glances. Presently the gavel in the Master's hand fell with a sharp rap on the pedestal at his right hand.

"The brothers will now take their posts," he announced as if inviting them to refreshment.

He rose to his feet and stood in his place. Then burst from his lips an anthem the air of which is familiar to at least three nations. It was caught up by the rest of the brothers, the Englishman rendering his familiar lines to the setting, and the German breaking in with a deep bass voice according to the version of the Fatherland. But the spirit of it was the same—that this handful of men were not as the multitude

without, to be set upon like rats in a trap. The giving up of their lives was going to mean something not soon forgotten. In the midst of it, the guard at the vestibule door waved his hand for silence. He was compelled to shout with full effort to make his voice heard above the thunder of that song.

"Worshipful Master," he called. "There is a signal on the outer door." Instantly silence fell. Arms were hastily grasped, with expectant postures tensely maintained.

"Who comes?" demanded Foster.

"A brother in distress."

"A brother in distress?"

Several voices echoed the surprising announcement. The brothers glanced upon one another as if to say: "How in the world can this be?" The whole lodge was present, and no other member of the fraternity known to be in the province. Foster designated two of the brothers to proceed to the outer door and investigate. They presently reported that a genuine member of the craft was outside in distress, seeking entrance and protection.

"Let him be admitted," ordered Foster.

Very cautiously the door was unbarred and opened. It was bolted again immediately behind the figure of a native attired like a coolie. He spoke with the two men assigned to test him for some minutes. They reported to the Master of the Lodge.

"We can vouch that the brother in distress has been duly admitted into a regular lodge in India. He has given us the proper evidence."

"Then let him come among us," delivered Foster.

As the native advanced into the hall all eyes were fixed upon him. He was observed to be of small, wiry build. His Mongolian features were, as usual, expressionless, but his eyes shot quick glances from side to side. His appearance and manner seemed to indicate that he had passed through a struggle. He bowed low in response to Foster's welcome and assurance that he was entitled to such protection as the lodge could offer.

"It may not be for long, brother," said Foster, "but we don't intend to go under without putting up a pretty stiff fight. We mean to make that plain to Firoz Khan."

"It is said that even Firoz Khan knows how to honor brave men," came the rejoinder, "being one who respects an oath."

"A bloodthirsty ruffian from all reports," someone asserted with heat.

The coolie merely inclined his head. "Who can tell by report?" he muttered.

In the frightful din and tumult which then succeeded, the presence of the native brother was almost overlooked. The others went to their posts ready to pour a rain of bullets into the court. Foster, in giving rapid directions, handed the native a pistol with which to defend himself.

"I do not have use for it," he replied, laying the weapon aside. "None of those here need have any fear. They will not be harmed or molested."

Foster turned abruptly and stared curiously at the native. Reports of firearms and shouts had entered with a wild tumult into the court. Gun muzzles were already pointing from loopholes, with fingers lightly resting on hair triggers.

"How do you mean? Who are you, anyway?" he demanded tersely.

"I," replied the native, "with the Worshipful Master's permission, will speak at the door. He will then learn for himself. He will witness this thing melt away from the court like snow from the steppes before the sun of summer."

He walked to the door, and banging loudly on it, lifted up his voice in an unknown tongue. It was not that of a coolie, for the accents were accustomed to command. Presently he was answered from the other side. Then orders were shouted in harsh guttural tones, and in that region comparative quiet followed.

"The Master sees I am obeyed," he addressed Foster. "On the faith of a brother's word let the door be opened."

Foster hesitated on the side of refusal. It was a critical situation. To open the door might be to invite an immediate

end, yet the native seemed to possess compelling authority. Foster again looked searchingly on him. Something in the other's steady gaze was convincing. Still, it was as well to be watchful.

"I don't know how much you may care for your life"—he handled his pistol significantly—"but—"

"Have I not taken the oath of the brothers?" the native interposed with a note of reproach. "Was not that supreme honor bestowed on me long years ago in India? Then did I not swear always to protect a brother? Were not your women and children conducted from this place in safety? So far was my oath kept. But there are those with Firoz Khan who said the white brothers would not protect another than themselves in distress. At such an hour they would not trust him among them. Behold"—he swept his hand in a half-circle—"can these walls not answer for their oath? Therefore I have spoken for what is best."

Foster summoned the others to stand ready in case the native could not make good his words, then assisted in opening the door guardedly. In the stream of light which swept outward a scene of ominous intent was revealed. Into the court had been driven a struggling herd of the city people. They were packed close against the walls of the lodge like sheep. Through them had ridden a detachment of Mongol horsemen on sturdy, shaggy ponies, up to the steps of the temple. They were of rough, uncouth appearance, armed with gleaming sabers and old-fashioned guns. Their drooping mustaches hung like walrus teeth, giving to their features a sinister mien. In the background the mass of the city loomed darkly, with a pause of tumult in the air as if the threatened carnage waited on a word or signal. As the door was swung wide open, the native brother strode into the aperture. He raised an arm above his head. The leader of the horsemen dropped from his saddle, and, saluting, stood waiting for a command.

"Everyone in this building and anyone who touches its walls are safe from

all harm," went forth in clear, ringing tones from the native brother.

The leader of the horsemen bowed low, responding in terms which acknowledged both rank and power.

"Ride swiftly and let this be known by my order," the native brother added. Foster stared at him in wonder.

"Who—who in the world are you?" he questioned.

"I—by the Master's favor—am Firoz Khan," the other simply answered.

"What! Firoz Khan—the General of the Mongol Army, the—the man whose name these people say makes the earth shake with terror?"

"Even so. Even so did Firoz Khan come into the city in these clothes beforehand, to keep his oath with the brothers, since no one might say there had been a mistake afterward."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Foster.

"Firoz Khan—that savage chap!" exclaimed Lacey. "By Jove, how remarkable!"

"Firoz Khan!" followed Herman Goltz. "Such a little man to make a big fright. And here with us! Is it possible?"

The others moved forward and grouped around in astonishment. Some moments of bewilderment followed. Presently Foster turned toward the Mongol leader.

"So far, General, none of us can do otherwise than appreciate your act. But—"

"Has the Master any cause for reproach?"

"Certainly not. But—I wish your power was made to reach further."

"Reach further! How is that you mean?" came the flashing rejoinder.

"Well—you have extended safety to us, and I gather to anyone who touches these walls. But how about the rest of the people in the city?"

Firoz Khan started and his brow grew sullen. He took a few hasty strides back and forth, to halt abruptly facing Foster.

"These people!" he retorted. "Do you know what they have done? You have not heard how I and my people were hunted down like wild beasts by

their governor and his soldiers? Now the beasts have turned upon them. That is my answer."

"You mean you intend to start a general massacre?" questioned Foster with quiet dignity.

The lips of Firoz Khan were closed tight. He did not respond.

"If I am to take your silence for assent," went on Foster with sternness, "then you cannot be regarded by us as a brother. We stand for a brotherhood which shields all defenseless people. In that case we shall refuse your protection and accept the consequences. Let our walls speak for what we did in your case. We saw in you only a coolie in distress."

Firoz Khan looked visibly troubled. A mental struggle was clearly taking place within him. At last he put a question:

"And will all I have done for you be as nothing—even to the safety of your women and children?"

"As nothing," answered Foster firmly. "You cannot be one of us and not lift your hand to stop a horrible massacre of other women and children. I'm sorry, but I'm compelled to speak like this."

Those looking on thought Foster seemed to stand a few inches higher, and they felt proud of the man who spoke as they felt. Followed a pause of dramatic intensity, for upon Firoz Khan's decision hung the lives of all present. The Mongol horsemen sat their ponies immovable, but with hands significantly grasping the hilts of their sabers. The crowd of upturned terrified faces watched with expressions changing from hope to doubt as each shade swept across Firoz Khan's face. One of the brothers began to whistle softly while counting his cartridges, for feelings were keyed up high, and the suspense was becoming oppressive.

"Well, General, I guess you're going to stay with us," encouraged Foster.

Still a long pause, during which the horsemen's ponies grew restive and drove their heels into the crowd.

"Sure," nodded Foster convincingly. "Firoz Khan has proved himself a man of honor. Men of honor do not slaughter the defenseless."

Firoz Khan looked into Foster's unflinching but friendly eyes, and a light broke on his face. The sullen cloud was swept away with the cruel turn at the corners of his lips. His hand went forth, to be grasped in the grip of a greater and wider brotherhood. Presently his words fell slowly and gravely.

"So let it be. By the oath that is binding between us, in this place will I do as the Master of it teaches."

Some say it was Lacey who began to cheer, because Herman Goltz was thumping the dread Firoz Khan on the shoulder. In any case, a shout of victory went up from the throats of the white men, at which the still uncertain throng marveled. Then at Firoz Khan's order a horseman rode by day and night to where the telegraph line remained intact, so that a welcome message might be flashed to the girl in San Francisco.



THE QUEEN'S HEART

By Herman Da Costa

IF I, my love, were sunshine,
And you, O sweet, were dew,
I'd drink you from the heather
And bring true loves together
With such wild, winsome weather,
That all loves would be true;
If I, my love, were sunshine,
And you, O sweet, were dew.

If you were sky, my darling,
And I, O sweet, were earth,
I'd reach your breast with towers
Of fragrance, built of flowers,
To bring you down in showers,
And give a new world birth;
If you were sky, my darling,
And I, O sweet, were earth.

If I were but a singer,
And you, my queen, the song,
I'd set such music beating
That sullen winter, fleeting,
Would bloom with buds of greeting,
And loves to hear me throng;
If I were but a singer,
And you, my queen, the song.



MONEY talks; but still, there is such a thing as "hush money."

MISS PHILIPPA AND THE DRY FARMER

By Janet Prentiss

PRESIDENT COFFIN, of Gordon College, was sitting with his feet on the table, "a-counting up his money." Though a youngish man, and, to judge by his feet, one of rather unpolished manners, he was particularly happy in catching the almighty dollar. Yet the frown slowly gathering upon his forehead betokened a shortage of some kind.

He looked up quickly as the very able head of the Agricultural Department entered the room. Professor Bush, a long thin man with an aggressive chin and rapidly receding hair, deposited his suitcase on the floor and pushed his straw hat to the far edge of his forehead. The spring term was just over, and the faculty, one by one, were departing for their homes and their vacations.

"So you're off, too, are you? I sent for you because there is a matter of business I want to talk over with you. By the way, where is it that you go?"

"Why, I'm off to Washington, you know," Professor Bush said in an injured tone. "I want to study the system of dry farming at the experiment station. I'll be there some time, I fancy. Anything else seems a waste of time. On my way home I shall stop over at Burlington for a week or so—I have relatives there."

"Good work! Any chance of our starting an experiment station here?"

"Not unless we use that crazy woman's fifty thousand. It's legitimate enough, I suppose—but even that isn't quite enough to put us into proper shape. An experiment station would be the making of Gordon College!"

"If you will raise another fifty thou-

sand dollars, I will let you have Miss Pratt's money. That's what I wanted to see you about. She lives near Burlington, I believe. It might pay you to go and see her. I've her letter here somewhere." He hunted through the desk drawers. "Why don't you get the rest from her, too? It's evident enough that she's got money to burn. What do you think?"

Professor Bush nodded slowly. "It might do—let's see the letter again."

"Here it is. I'd forgotten how funny it was." President Coffin laughed uproariously, and passed the letter over to Professor Bush.

SAYVILLE.

MR. GEORGE D. COFFIN,
President, Gordon College.

DEAR SIR:

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$51,375.21. I wish to endow, as a memorial to my mother, Philippa Dawes Pratt, a bed—a bed for flowers in the Department of Agriculture in Gordon College.

Yours truly,

PHILIPPA PEASE PRATT.

"She must live in an insane asylum," gasped Professor Bush. "Sayville—I never heard of Sayville. However, I'll look the old lady up and let you know." Professor Bush set his hat at a respectable angle and was off with a "So long! Pleasant summer!"

About the first of September, after an excessively warm but entirely satisfactory summer, as far as dry farming went, Professor Bush made his way reluctantly toward Burlington. Nothing but the hope of raising the extra fifty thousand dollars to start the good work at Gordon College could have torn him away from the vicinity of Washington and the ex-

periment station. He stopped over a train at Sayville, and asked to be directed to the home of Miss Philippa Pease Pratt—if that lady were at large.

"Is it a private residence?" he asked. Oh, yes, it was private enough, but there seemed to be some doubt about its being a *residence*. On being directed to follow Main Street till he came to the end of it, he made all haste to do so. The day was hot, as September days are wont to be. His bag seemed very heavy, for he shifted it from hand to hand every few minutes, but his eyes ran ahead of his feet at the sight of every particularly large and impressive mansion. Main certainly was a long street!

Professor Bush's face was very red and his collar quite wilted when he finally arrived at the very end of the street. Here at last, set in the midst of fields which boldly displayed a lamentable lack of the latest agricultural methods, he found a tiny old-fashioned house, standing unashamed in his presence, under the shade of a magnificent elm.

Professor Bush (at being so misdirected, probably) walked angrily up the shallow steps and rapped, a trifle louder than was necessary, with the shining brass knocker. Then he set down his suitcase and fanned his red face with his worn straw hat. After a moment or two—long enough, say, to allow time to wipe painty hands—three slender fingers held the door open on a crack, out of which peered Miss Philippa Pease Pratt. Whether Professor Bush took time to notice it or not, she was a very beautiful woman. The beautiful woman's eyes fell immediately upon the suitcase.

"No, thank you," she said, closing the door a little more; "I've got everything I want. I don't care for any today."

"Any what?" demanded Professor Bush angrily. "I'm not a book agent!"

"Oh, no, of course not! But I don't want any today. I've a plenty."

"Plenty of what?" demanded again the irate professor of agriculture in Gordon College.

"Of everything—of what's in your box there—I don't know what." Miss Philippa spoke gently but firmly.

"I've a pair of pajamas, a toothbrush,

a safety razor, two collars and a change of undergarments in that box," he said grimly.

"Oh, excuse me!" cried Miss Philippa earnestly, blushing hotly. "I don't need—that is, I'm not married."

Professor Bush smiled even more grimly. "I'm not a peddler," he said haughtily, "but a fool! Set a fool to catch a fool! I'm in search of Miss Philippa Pease Pratt. Can you direct me to her?"

"Oh, how do you do? I'm Miss Philippa Pease Pratt." She held out her hand.

"I might have known it," exclaimed Professor Bush. "If I may come in a moment, I'll try to explain."

"Certainly," said Miss Philippa—"since you don't want to sell anything. Because, you know," she explained, still looking suspiciously at the bag, "I've everything in the world that I want."

"So I've understood," Professor Bush said. "One wouldn't think it, though"—he looked around him with critical eyes—"from your—your humble surroundings."

"My neighbors *are* rather humble," admitted Philippa, "but I like them all the better for that. I don't care for splendor myself."

"So I see," admitted Professor Bush in his turn. "You have all the more to give away—"

"Yes, of course," she said vaguely, "but I haven't much to give, you see."

Though Miss Philippa might have difficulty in convincing Professor Bush that she preferred this simple way of living, she had lately proved it to the entire dissatisfaction of her friends. In the days of her early poverty everyone commiserated her upon her lack; but when one day she came into an unexpected windfall of fifty thousand dollars, and gave it away whole the same day—well, whatever they may have thought of her, they certainly ceased to pity her. Miss Philippa very wisely refrained from telling her friends what she had done with the money. President Coffin and Professor Bush, of Gordon College, knew more about that than anyone else. Miss

Philippa was rich on five hundred dollars a year.

"Haven't much to give? I'm not so sure about that!" cried Professor Bush, looking eagerly around the room. What he saw might well make him think that she was overmodest as to her worldly goods.

The walls were crowded with warm, rich paintings—even a connoisseur might for a moment have been deceived into thinking that soft, misty landscape in the far corner a genuine Corot. They were all beautiful—the work of a true artist, if not that of a master. Miss Philippa had painted them.

Then, too, those magnificent specimens of rare old mahogany, Chippendale and Hepplewhite. A pink luster tea set, old Canton china and Lowestoft gleamed through the little diamond panes of the built-in china closet, and his eye caught the soft glow of rare leather-bound editions in the bookshelves around the walls.

Professor Bush came from that great indefinite area known as the Middle West, where the grandparents of very few men were born. If, therefore, these grandparents ever owned almost priceless china, superb Chippendale and rare editions, they had left them behind in the garrets of the old homes. Caravans and stagecoaches had little room for such useless lumber, nor were log cabins built with an eye to family heirlooms. The only people Professor Bush knew who owned these things were the newly rich who had spent fabulous sums for them.

Small wonder if he came to the conclusion—as his expression of awe in the face of these antiques indicated—that Miss Philippa Pease Pratt was wealthy!

"You've come"—suggested Philippa, as Professor Bush's eyes took a careful inventory of these priceless treasures, so carelessly displayed—"you've come—"

"I've come from Gordon College."

"Oh, really! Are you President Coffin?" she asked eagerly.

"No. I'm James Bush—the head of the Agricultural Department."

"That's even better!" cried Philippa.

"It was so good of you to come."

"We feel that we can hardly thank

you enough for your most generous gift," said James Bush. "We are even emboldened, so great was your generosity, to trespass upon your time and your kindness again."

"Oh, not at all, Mr. Bush; I've plenty of time—that's the one thing I've lots of! And kindness, too, I hope."

"I'm convinced of your kindness, certainly; that's why I'm here."

"I'm so glad you liked it," cried Miss Philippa faintly, well-nigh inarticulate with suppressed emotion of some kind. "I'm glad you were pleased. It was in memory of my dear mother," she added, wiping a delicate moisture from her eyelids. "She was so fond of flowers." Miss Philippa was lost in a soft reverie, during which Professor Bush, with a look of agonized embarrassment, turned and twisted in his chair. He coughed once or twice discreetly. The cough recalled Philippa's wandering thoughts. She smiled at Professor Bush in a dazed fashion, then she said: "I couldn't think at first what to do with all that money. I had all I could possibly want already. Did you found a bed. Was it lovely?"

"Oh, yes, we founded a bed, and it was—er—very lovely indeed, for a single bed; but you see," he explained patiently, "we are exceedingly anxious to double our accommodations—and we have only half the money we need."

"Oh, I'm so sorry there was not enough—but why must you have a double bed?" asked Philippa in a terribly disappointed tone.

"Our quarters are so limited—we must do the best we can for our room."

Miss Philippa Pease Pratt, of New England parentage, may have thought it not quite "nice" to be talking of double beds and double rooms to this utter stranger. She endeavored to change the subject, at any rate. Perhaps she felt that her mother, though dead, might still serve as a sort of chaperon, for she said vaguely:

"Mother would have been so pleased."

Perhaps at this new reference to her mother Professor Bush feared more tears, for he stirred nervously.

"To tell the truth," he began, in a

straightforward way that was not unattractive, "I'm intensely interested in dry farming, and—"

Here evidently was something that Philippa could understand.

"Oh," she cried, "then you are a dry farmer, are you?"

"I am," laughed Professor Bush. "That's just what I am—a *very* dry farmer!"

"Why, you poor thing! Why didn't you say so at first, instead of letting me think you were a book agent or after money for something? Will you have water—or I'll make you some tea, and then you can tell me all about your farm!"

Though Miss Philippa, he found, had a deep interest in gardening in general, she was as ignorant as a child about all the latest methods in agriculture. He was obliged to go very slowly. Indeed, when he finally went home that evening he was no nearer doubling his accommodations than before. He had not even pressed the question of the extra fifty thousand. He may not unnaturally have felt that the times were not ripe for it. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," he quoted to himself, and sent for his trunk.

After as hearty a dinner as though he had not already had supper with Miss Philippa Pease Pratt, he engaged his room for another week. Then he took out his pencil and made certain calculations, in which not only the original sum figured, but an additional fifty thousand or so. Certainly, however, Miss Philippa should not be blamed if the dry farmer undertook to count his chickens before they were hatched.

The next morning was warm and sultry. The Professor opened his suspicious suitcase and took out a pair of white trousers (which he had neglected to mention), also one of the precious white collars. Then he went for a long walk, studying the distressingly tumble-down condition of the houses and the terribly unscientific treatment of the fields. He made copious notes and might have been heard to exclaim, with a mournful shake of the head: "If only every college in America had such an

equipment as ours, the whole face of the country would soon be changed!" It would seem that Professor Bush was an optimist! He reached Miss Philippa's little cottage at four o'clock, apparently as thirsty and as dry as ever. Pray, what could Miss Philippa do but ask him to tea again?

Before they had finished tea, the rain which had threatened all day came down in torrents. Since there was no chance to show him her garden, Miss Philippa said perhaps he might explain just what he meant by dry farming—it might help her in her own garden. Why was he dryer, as he unmistakably was, than any other farmer?

Certainly, he said truthfully, nothing would please him better than to get her interest in his project. She might even help some—"

"How delightful!" cried Miss Philippa. "She did love to help!"

The somewhat evasive answers he had received from certain adroit questions put to the village people had not evidently enlightened him very much. To his "Is Miss Pratt wealthy?" he got: "She's given more'n she had any right to charitable institutions." And to his "She lives very simply," he heard: "Oh, Philippy's got notions!" and "She don't want for nothing, I guess."

Sheets of rain shut out the garden and shut in the warmth and glow of Miss Philippa's studio, parlor and dining room in one. It was wonderfully pleasant. Perhaps in this quiet room, so remote from his world, so different from anything he had ever known, sitting beside this dark-eyed, sympathetic woman who exerted a strange charm over everyone—perhaps for the first time it may have gradually come over Professor Bush that there might be other things in life almost as pleasant as dry farming.

To do him justice, however, in spite of any such disturbing thought, he very thoroughly ventilated his knowledge of dry farming, as well as his past, present and future hopes in that field, if he did not suggest the additional gift of fifty thousand dollars to Gordon College.

He began by asking: "Do you know *anything* about dry farming?"

Miss Philippa replied modestly and truthfully that she did not. She had heard often of dry cleaning but never of dry farming.

"What you need more than anything else," began Professor Bush decisively, "is cultivation."

Miss Philippa started quite out of her chair. "Why," she faltered, "many people have thought I came from Boston!"

"Boston!" He looked astonished. "You've got to go West for the new methods—Boston isn't in it when it comes to cultivation and all that! Why," he said, "did you never hear that you ought to go over the earth every few days?"

"But I can't afford to travel!" cried Philippa, almost in tears. Cultivation, indeed!

"Come out to Gordon College, and we'll show you what cultivation can do!" exclaimed Professor Bush boastfully.

"After this Miss Philippa confined herself to such noncommittal statements as, 'How interesting!' 'Indeed!' 'Oh, yes!' 'Oh, no!' in response to his impassioned yet scientific explanations.

"In a garden," he began, "you must give each plant plenty of room—to allow both for its expansion and its cultivation. Then, by going over the earth thoroughly after each rain, you save yourself a vast amount of work in the way of watering. Besides, this 'conserving the soil,' as we call it, is useful in encouraging a deeper root growth. You've no idea what a difference this method would make in your garden in a comparatively short time!"

"I'm sure it would be helpful," murmured Philippa. That she did not quite understand all this dry information was manifest in certain surreptitious yawns. But this was before she drew him on to talk about himself; Miss Philippa knew more about life than about dry farming. As he rose to go, she said with flattering enthusiasm:

"You must come early in the morning and see my garden—I shall be watering it. Come to breakfast."

Professor Bush's jaw fell. On top, too, of all his explanations!

"Watering it! After all this rain? My dear Miss Pratt, what you need is cultivation!"

But Miss Philippa, it seems, was very forgiving, for as she brushed out her misty hair that night she said to her image in the glass with happy symbolism: "I wonder if I should mind very much—being transplanted? Some flowers can't bear it—poppies, for instance."

Miss Philippa came out on her little piazza just as the sun was rising. A golden mist lay over her garden. With a soft sigh of pleasure she sank down on the lowest step and looked abroad on all the beauty that God and she had created. Her low exclamation of delight would indicate that she, too, found it "very good."

After a while she rose with a little frown and lighted the spirit lamp under the coffee pot and set out the rolls and honey.

"Why did I ask him to breakfast?" she said. Just then his eager step resounded in the early morning air the length of Main Street, and with a happy shout like a boy he ran forward to greet her.

"This is something like!" he cried, looking into her face with boyish pleasure. "I haven't had such a good time since—since—" He flung out his arm with a quick gesture, and his eyes followed to the garden at his feet. He stopped just where he was, in the middle of his sentence, with arm still extended, and stared in horror at Miss Philippa's garden.

Masses and masses of pink and white flowers, fair as an orchard in May, and everywhere masses. Not a quarter of an inch of common earth to be seen in all that beautiful world she had created for herself. Phlox white and pink and soft gradations of rose, and between these late hollyhocks reared their stately heads with tall lilies. Snapdragon, gilly-flowers and every loved annual bloomed together in exquisite disorder, and when there was room for nothing else, hosts upon hosts of Shirley poppies pushed their slender stems and swayed delicately in the breeze.

"You like it?" asked a pleased voice

at his elbow. "I hadn't expected you to like it so much—being a man—and a farmer."

"Like it!" groaned Professor Bush. "What a garden! What an untidy garden! Everything in a heap—what a garden!"

Slow tears rose in Miss Philippa's dark eyes, and her lip quivered ever so little. "Then you don't like it?"

"Like it! Why, don't you see, it goes against every theory I have! Every theory," he added bitterly, "that I expounded last night. I'm afraid you don't remember. If you would just let me *show* you what I mean, I'm sure you would understand better. May I?" he asked eagerly. "Just here in this corner?"

"Why, yes, if you like." Philippa turned away a moment to wipe the tear which rolled slowly down her cheek. When she had quite regained her self-control, she looked around for Professor Bush, who had so delicately, it would seem, refrained from speaking to her just then.

Miss Philippa remained rooted where she stood, and though her lips moved, no sound issued forth. She started forward, but her trembling legs failed her, too, and she sank in a heap on the lowest step. Her faint "Stop! Stop!" did not reach the garden where Professor Bush was busy uprooting plants by the handfuls. The grass walk was strewn with a kaleidoscopic mass of Shirley poppies.

"And they don't transplant!" sobbed Philippa. "Stop! Stop! Stop!"

But Professor Bush evidently never thought of stopping. On he went. Having finished the poppies, he tackled the phlox manfully—and certainly it was a man's work! Here and there he left a plant. His glasses were pushed up to his receding hair, and he plunged ahead in charming abandon.

Miss Philippa, with one tremendous effort, tottered down the path and laid a weak hand on his shoulder. "Stop!" was all she said—"stop this minute!" Professor Bush did not seem to hear her, for he said genially:

"What you want is specimen plants, and they must have plenty of room to

expand. Five feet for delphinium, three feet for phlox, two feet for lilies and one foot for annuals."

"Stop!" cried Philippa loudly, but Professor Bush was quite undeterred by a woman's weak words—if he heard them. He smiled happily and continued to weed.

One despairing glance at him Miss Philippa gave, then turned and fled into the house. She came back presently, rolling before her the round English bathtub; then she went back for the washtubs. She endeavored to bring the porcelain tub next, but this resisted her mightiest efforts. Then came all the washbowls and pitchers in the house, the foot tub, the dishpan, the breadpan and all the goblets, tumblers and flower vases. Calculating carefully the height of the sun, she put them in the shadiest corner, and then, with another confirming glance at Professor Bush, who was by this time halfway through the garden, she ran back for the hose and filled all these receptacles with water, crying between her sobs: "He'll be sorry! He'll be sorry!" She was almost as busy as Professor Bush. The merciful sky became overcast. By the time she had completed her preparations, Professor Bush was also through, and with the pleased look of a child, came forward, and seizing her unwilling hands, cried:

"Do you see what I've done? You can cultivate the soil now, instead of watering it. You'll thank me for saving you all that work."

Philippa turned sick eyes on her garden. Here and there, in an expanse of bare earth, he had left a poor, misshapen, unpropped plant, standing aloof from its fellows.

"Looks better, eh?" demanded Professor Bush with the air of one who loved his fellow men.

"Are you quite through?" asked Philippa frigidly. "Quite—quite through?"

Professor Bush studied the garden with troubled eyes. "Yes, I think so. If there's anything more you could suggest—"

"Yes," said Miss Philippa decisively, "there is! Now you'll please put every one back! Every single one! There

they are in water at the side of the house. Begin, please."

"But I haven't had any breakfast yet!"

"Neither have I," said Philippa. "Every single one of them, except the poppies."

They worked together side by side the rest of the day. Philippa held the watering pot and Professor Bush the spade. He was going over the earth thoroughly, as he had advocated. Philippa allowed him to snatch a bite, standing, at noon, and then they went on again. By four o'clock every plant was restored to its rightful place, except here and there, where Philippa had long meditated a change in her color scheme.

When it was all over Professor Bush turned to go.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said manfully, with a wave of his hand toward the fainting garden; "I'm terribly sorry. I didn't stop to think. May I come again—Philippa?"

Philippa shook her head sadly. "No," she said. "I think not—no!"

They shook grimy hands, and with a head as drooping as one of Miss Philippa's plants, Professor Bush, without a backward glance at her or his dry farming, limped lamely back to the village—minus the fifty thousand additional dollars and his dignity. Main certainly was a *very* long street!



THE LITTLE ROAD O' KERRY

By Gordon Johnstone

'TIS long, long since I trod the road, the little road o' Kerry
That's winding in and out the years thro' gorse and shamrock glen;
And, oh, me feet's a-yearning to be finding it with Terry,
To hunt the little wayside nest and kiss the babbie wren;
Oh, 'twas thrilling, thrilling, thrilling
Where the blackbirds and the thrushes
Whistled 'mong the waving rushes
O' that far countree.

I thought when in the new world that me heart might be forgetting
The song a-trilling on his lips the music o' his love,
But everywhere I turn, ochone, 'tis tears the tune's begetting
For, oh, it throngs me drowsing as the fairies throng the grove;
Oh, 'tis haunting, haunting, haunting
Like the ghost o' childhood hours
Or the breath o' wind-kissed flowers
O' that far countree.

'Tis long, long since I trod the road, the little road o' Kerry
That's winding in and out, me tears a-falling day by day,
And, oh, me heart's a-breaking to be walking it with Terry
And hear his bit o' love song as we went adown the way;
Oh, 'tis calling, calling, calling
And I'm harking here in sorrow,
But praise God I'll sail tomorrow
For that far countree.

THE SEINE

By Paul Scott Mowrer

WHO sees you, siren stream, a spring forenoon,
Laughing in light from shore to shining shore,
The very blue of heaven flaked and strewn
Upon your surface, while the clouds of June
Swim silvery just under as just o'er,
Knows where the lustrous eyes of Paris learn
With so bright gaiety to flash and burn.

Who studies you as twilight settles round,
And sees your burnished brilliancy subside
Into such tender flushes as are found
Only in artist eyes, piercing profound
Some painted, soul-wrought dream; who sees you glide
In iris mist of evening shade attired,
Knows how the city's beauty is inspired.

Who sees you in the night, strangely bedecked,
Your lithe form girt with jewels red and gold,
Pale amethyst and crystal, overflecked
With a fine silver net, wherein collect
Small sobs of passion, or enticement bold
Of long-held sighs; who sees you sulking thus,
Knows why the city's pulse is amorous.

And who, as the pale dawn pervades Grenelle,
Looks on while boatmen from your shrouding drag
A dripping corpse—oh, if that sop could tell
Why he who leaped and left it found life hell,
Would not shame scorch us all?—who sees that bag
Of wretched flesh, feels, and with catching breath,
Something of how the city ogles death.



IF we judged ourselves by the same standards we use for judging others, many of us would be cutting our own acquaintance.

THE PARIS OF THE FRENCH

By William Richard Hereford

PARIS is rediscovered every year by at least eleven American authors. For the most part they are professional discoverers employed by some magazine or newspaper that knows in advance just what it wishes discovered. Their voyage of discovery generally begins on the *terrasse* of the Café de la Paix, which they describe with ingenuous originality as the center of the universe, ignoring but not in the least unmindful of the fact that all the other "ten" and their predecessors from the time of Booth Tarkington and George Ade have made use of the same happy phrase.

It is here, too, that they run up their discoverer's flag and lay claim to certain other fields that bear, unfortunately, the well marked footprints of those who have gone before. Each one discovers from this vantage point of the Café de la Paix that the American traveler is to be distinguished from the native of Paris by the shoes he wears; that you cannot get a hard-boiled egg in France; that the cabmen block street traffic for an hour to discuss the state of the weather; that the spirit of Paris is typified by the painted women who ply their ancient trade along the Grand Boulevards; that the prevailing French beverage is absinthe; that business in France is a farce because Frenchmen devote two hours to their luncheon; that the deplorable condition of the cabhorses demonstrates that the French are a cruel race; that the French are immodest; that they are not clean because no soap is to be found in the hotels.

From the "center of the universe" our discoverers go to Montmartre or the more adventurous make a visit to

the Latin Quarter and spend an afternoon in the Café du Dome, after which they know Paris. When these Dr. Cooks of literature return to America they publish their discoveries, and those who stay at home and read speak with worldly knowledge of "gay Paree" and picture the capital of France as a city where every street is a Great White Way; where the natives spend their money and their time in watching the Apache dance and where the principal music is made by the popping of champagne corks. Oh, naughty, gay Paree!

One must be as mad as Don Quixote to combat this idea. It is too deep-rooted now in the American mind to hope ever to destroy it. And, besides, there are always the Eleven Little Discoverers to proclaim it as true.

The saddest part of it all is that these authors never see any parts of Paris except those parts the guides have ready for them. The only act of the show they get tickets for is an act filled with American specialties. And why shouldn't it be so? Ten out of the eleven do not speak a word of French and the eleventh can make himself understood only in restaurants. Like Kipling's hero, they must take their fun where they find it, and the only place they are able to find it without a guide, or even with one, is where English is spoken and French tolerated. It is for this linguistic reason undoubtedly that so many American men who flee from America for the express purpose of "getting away from things at home for a while" arrive in Paris and proceed to spend the better part of every day and night in the mis-called "American bars," where the conversation never by any accident drifts

away from Broadway or the next steamer back.

Paris is a patient, uncomplaining, long-suffering city. It supports good-humoredly these authoritative opinions of gentlemen who are so accurately misinformed. If New York were as grossly libeled by unpainstaking tourists there would be mass meetings of protest and indignant citizens would bear petitions to the Mayor calling for an official statement vigorously correcting the erroneous reports. But Paris smiles and welcomes the traveler with undiminished courtesy, and there is not even a shrug of the shoulders when blatant visitors ungratefully proclaim, as they do every day: "Without the Americans Paris could not exist!" Because of the *Titanic* disaster that held up a forbidding skeleton's hand to warn the timid traveler, because of the strikes and because of a political ferment that Europe cannot comprehend, there have been fewer foreign visitors to Paris this year than for many years before. I do not recall a spring or summer when the capital of France was so genuinely French, and yet there have been no cries of distress, no suffering among even the dressmakers of the Rue de la Paix. The Grand Prix was run in the rain before the greatest crowd that ever witnessed that classic race at Longchamps; the Pari-Mutuel recorded the largest amount ever bet on the competing horses.

Not long ago, while waiting in the lobby of one of those hotels in Paris conducted by and for foreigners, I overheard a young American deliver his judgment upon Paris. He was obviously of the type that had seen it all; there was little more that he could be told and he was speaking the last word to impress two young girls, compatriots, who accepted his opinion as that of a true man of the world.

"Paris," proclaimed the youth, "is no place for women!" He spoke loudly as if defying contradiction.

Certainly, the Paris he had seen, the Americanized, Anglicized, Russianized, South-Americanized Paris was no place for women. It is no place for men, either, but there is no other city in the

world so eminently a city for women as the real Paris. There is no other city where so much is done to attract women who have a true sense of the beautiful and genuine aspiration for the artistic such as most women are born with and never lose. Only a few weeks ago the Municipal Council by a formal decree caused the buildings in the wide Rue de Castiglione, which runs into the Place Vendôme, to be garlanded with flowers, just to give to the thoroughfare through which so many women pass an added touch of beauty.

An American friend, one of that never ending procession of visiting American friends one meets and entertains in Paris, recently told me quite frankly of his experiences. He had obtained a guide and had started out with his wife to see the often described night life of the capital as the Little Discoverers had painted it. His unadorned story was horrible. This man and his wife, who at home are a modest, conventional, commonplace pair, had been dragged by that unblushing guide through the filth of Paris. They had been to places that, in America, he would rather have died than see his wife enter. They had witnessed scenes that anywhere else would have filled him with loathing and shame. And yet this poor fool had done what he had done simply because he thought he was doing the usual thing, that he was seeing the phase of Paris that is most talked of. To excuse his conscience, which was heavy, he had persuaded himself that this was a part of the education he had expected to derive from a trip abroad. Nor is he alone as an example. Men and women coming to Paris go to look upon vice with a laugh; they see human depravity as a spectacle and persuade themselves they are being amused. It is "seeing Paris"!

Anyone who has made his home in Paris can tell you that nine-tenths of those who come from America wish to see this seamy side and a great many are unwilling that their excursion into the pit should stop at the all-night restaurants where the creatures of the night try to forget the day. They have gained their ideas from the writings of the

Eleven Annual Discoverers and the American Bar tourists. They really think it is Paris. They could see the same thing in New York or in any other big city, but they would never ask to see it there. They would be ashamed even to suggest the desire, and they would resent as an insult a proposal that they should rub shoulders with that soiled portion of the underworld.

Vice is not local or national. It is not confined to France. In America and England it exists as it exists in Europe, but Anglo-Saxons seek to hide it with a thin cloak of hypocrisy. They will not even admit that it is there. They try to ignore it. Some even deny its existence, but their denial convinces no one, least of all themselves. The European is surprised that anyone should attempt to controvert the known fact with a denial; he does not understand our attitude. I confess that more than once I have tried to explain it to inquiring Frenchmen and have found the explanation difficult unless one admits as a premise a Puritan-born hypocrisy, which one, of course, does not like to admit. It doesn't sound well. Frenchmen and Frenchwomen will tell you quite freely and with a frankness that astounds the Anglo-Saxon that they know vice abounds in their greatest city and that the Babylonian woman is on view in the restaurants of Montmartre, but they do not go there—they leave that to the visiting foreigners.

Montmartre, as visitors to Paris know it, is not Paris. It exists in every capital; more grossly in Berlin, more luridly in Buda-Pesth or Bucharest, more restricted in Rome or Florence, more legitimized in Pekin or Tokio, more dis-solutely in St. Petersburg, more sordidly in the Tenderloin of New York. Just why Americans should come to Paris to hunt out these Tenderloin establishments is interesting as a psychological study. One might easily imagine that that thin cloak of hypocrisy rested heavily upon them, so heavily that they embraced eagerly the opportunity to lay it for a moment aside.

There is another Montmartre that the tourist does not know and, although so

near, he never sees. It lies right at his hand when he is dining at the Abbaye or dancing at the Bal Tabarin, but the red and white lights of the Rue and Place Pigalle seem to blind him to its existence. It lies higher up the hill beyond the Boulevards Extérieurs. You might take time to climb the winding Rue Lepic or mount the steps that lead to Sacré Cœur; it would be worth your while, for here is the Montmartre of Henri Murger and his "*Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*" and of Charpentier and "Louise," and—lest you get the idea that this is all music and poetry and art—the Montmartre of Maire Clémenceau and the Commune. It is a beautiful place, this real Montmartre, by night or day. From its heights you look down upon the roofs of the great city and can see in the day-time monuments and palaces and distinguish the wide, tree-planted open spaces that make Paris so attractive, and when the daylight has gone and no longer the well known objects present their familiar forms, but melt into the shadow, the lights of the city suddenly burst forth brilliantly at your feet and you are gazing down upon an inverted heaven with myriads of stars shining.

But you may not find this Montmartre in a moment and there are no guides for hire who can show it to you. Its discovery is a matter of patience; the road that leads to it is really longer than the Rue Lepic itself, and unless Sympathy guide you you are pretty sure to miss it altogether, but the way is made pleasant by wonderful stories and beautiful pictures, and, once you have really found it, you can stand upon that height gazing for a long time with untiring delight upon a prospect that has inspired men to give to the world masterpieces in music and literature and art. But, believe me, if your visiting scribblers or if your schedule-shackled tourists were taken to this Montmartre they would be disappointed just as, invariably, they are disappointed in the Latin Quarter because the famous "Boul' Mich'" is a wide, airy thoroughfare, and the University which for a thousand years has given the district its name is a great solid, modern pile that seems in keeping

with intellectuality and earnest study and not a part of the frivolity they had expected from reading "Trilby." And it is a disappointment to them, too, that the streets of "the Quarter" are cleaner and better paved than the streets of New York.

Of the real Paris, of the city itself and its intimate and incomparable beauty, of its people and their habits or thoughts, what can those know who gain glimpses from swiftly passing automobiles or from the tops of Cook's wagons? One may see only once that famous sweep of the narrowing Avenue des Champs Elysées from the Place de la Concorde up to the great Arc de Triomphe and retain the impression forever afterward; indeed, one is not likely to forget, even after a glimpse, that unfolding vista, undoubtedly the most magnificent bit of urban scenic landscape in the world, but really to appreciate its beauty one must have seen it at all seasons and at all hours: in the spring when the avenue is lined with chestnut trees all white with blossoms; in the fall when the reddened leaves make a golden pathway to the Arc; in winter when the mist and rain convert the spectacle into a shadowy vision; in the morning when the Arc is white under the early sun; at evening when the sun sets behind the wide arch and its magnified silhouette is outlined against the flaming sky like the altar of Fame in a terrestrial Valhalla. And as it is with this monument, which is known to even the American Bar traveler, so, in infinitely greater degree, is it with the entire city and its people.

What can they know of it all, those Eleven Annual Discoverers personally conducted? And yet Paris is not a difficult city to comprehend. The city is not mysterious, and the people, despite their ancient civilization, are not complex. Above all Paris is the City of Friendliness. It offers all her charms for the foreigner as well as for the native born. The arriving guest is met at the walls and made to feel that he is welcome. There is no cold London reserve to keep the stranger forever mindful that he is in a strange land; there is no Berlin boorishness to depress and repel; there is no

bewildering New York rush of people toward selfish goals to make the heart sick. The Parisian of all classes has the time to interest himself in his neighbor, and yet, withal, not impertinently. Do what you wish as long as it works no injury or discomfort to your neighbor; that is the creed of Paris. It is a city of liberty, of liberty of thought and liberty of action.

There are those who, wise from much reading, will smile knowingly and assert that I have euphemistically selected the word and that one should read "license" rather than "liberty." They will base their opinion upon what they have seen of *demi-mondaines* freely disporting themselves in marvelous dressmaking creations at the race courses, theaters and other public places, or they will call attention to the lewd literature displayed in little shops in the Rue de Rivoli or in the Palais Royal. It is not within the scope of this article to enter upon a discussion of the morals of Paris—that may be reserved for another time; but in passing it may be permitted to say that French republicanism holds that even the *demi-monde* has its rights; that nature with its inconvenient inclinations is stronger than any code of man-created laws; and the fact may be cited, not by way of justification but as a suggestion fit for reflection, that the vilest books displayed to attract the vicious are printed in English. There is an active league in France for the suppression of pornographic books and traffic in obscene literature is punishable by law, but in this as in other operations of justice the authorities proceed with discretion and care is taken that a man's rights are not infringed upon. In France there are no anti-vice societies to which have been delegated the right to punish or prosecute citizens; that right is reserved for the State, which, with the lesson of the Revolution in mind, is slow to equip one individual with a power that might be used to persecute another.

Let us leave the *demi-mondaines* and the vendors of erotic and neurotic literature to the Eleven Little Discoverers to supply that bright and sparkling humor to their articles which is expected from

them and, following our own preferences, let us walk along the wide Avenue du Bois de Boulogne on a Sunday morning or on any bright morning and see the real French people, the *bourgeoisie*, the shopkeepers, the tradespeople, the middle classes taking their airing. Of course you will find more of them on Sunday than on any other day, but whenever the weather is fine this lovely avenue, lined with tree-fronted palaces, becomes a promenade ground for people who love light and air and broad spaces and beauty. You will see that on their way to or from the Bois they are courteous, leisurely, dignified, polite and natural. They are not posing; they are not walking along before the palaces to impress anyone, least of all to impress people they do not know and who do not know them; they are not giving themselves airs; they are not rushing; they are not busied with those who pass; they are not laughing or sneering at others; they are not craning their necks to bow to someone in an automobile or carriage; they are enjoying the day with good humor in their hearts and charity in their souls.

Here, too, one may see close at hand the aristocracy of France. Between the quiet good manners and repose of the Avenue du Bois and the uneasy ostentation of Fifth Avenue there lie at least three generations, probably three centuries.

But best of all in this parklike thoroughfare is it to see the children of the French. Something of the same coquetry of dress that has become proverbial with the French woman is evident in the costumes of the little girls and boys, so that a French child seems always well dressed. If you are in Paris and are not one of those sightseers driven either by Cook or the recommendations of the Little Discoverers, spend a sunny morning in this Avenue du Bois or in the Champs Elysées or in the Tuileries or in the Luxembourg gardens watching the French children at play, and I think you will agree with me that French children are the most beautiful in the world. Their dark eyes are afire with intelligence, their cheeks aglow with enthusi-

asm, their lithe bodies graceful as they play at their games; the boys with their rubber balls or footballs or the younger ones with their whip-tops; the girls with their hoops or their skipping rope or engaged in "*à la chaudière*," which is our own hopscotch. Albeit they are so eager and so excited, they are amazingly well-behaved; though they laugh a great deal, there is an absence of boisterousness; they are rarely rude or spiteful to each other, and while it is true that a French child of six or seven when under observation may show herself to be a consummate little actress, it is rare that one finds the tendency to "show off" and be smart that is such a deplorable characteristic of so many otherwise charming American children. In France the spoiled child is not so commonly thrust upon you by overproud parents; it would seem that French mothers exercise in the upbringing of their offspring some of that practical good sense which makes them excellent housekeepers and thrifty wives.

There is the Paris of the Tourists and the Paris of the Parisians, and somewhere between the two lies the Paris of the Resident Foreigners. It is doubtful if any other city in the world can show the same cordial recognition of foreigners; the University is open to them; they may share in the privileges of the Beaux-Arts; they are not barred from the great library; the societies of painters and sculptors who, with the aid of the government, organize the great Spring Salons, throw open their doors to foreigners. Bring something new to Paris, something better than its own sons can produce, and even though you be a German—the only person a Frenchman will not tolerate—you will know no lack of recognition and encouragement.

It is for these reasons that so many from other lands make their homes in Paris. There is a large Russian colony with grand dukes who carouse while their compatriots, men and women students of the Sorbonne, actually die from want of bread; there is a colony of South Americans who come to Paris laden with money and remain as long as it lasts. An Argentinian or Brazilian setting out

to enjoy life in the French capital never announces how long he will be gone. "I am taking so many thousand francs," he says, "and shall return when I have spent it." Their cousins, the Spanish and the Portuguese, of whom there are many in Paris, are less liberal. Of the American colony alone more than one entertaining book could be written, a book of striving students, of snobbish social climbers, of strange transplanted enthusiasms, of exiles, of adventurers, of little men and little women who buzz about a little embassy, of big men with big ideas, of women with the hearts of heroines and the souls of angels, of youth that stands in fields of asphodel regarding an ideal.

Paris makes welcome the foreigner without losing any of her own individuality; the Frenchman holds out a hand of cordial greeting without ever once forgetting that he is French; he is intensely patriotic and proud of France with its glorious and inglorious history; he accepts it all as his own splendid heritage; but the Gallic cock does not crow in the sense that the American eagle is made to scream; there is here none of that too loud boasting that sometimes betrays a lack of that very confidence it is supposed to indicate.

It does not matter to Paris if you live in a garret. Your work is all that is regarded; not what you have or what you do, but the way you do it and what you are is what concerns Paris. It is a city where performance counts for more than possession; where means are measured no less than the man. You are respected though you may have little more than enough to buy the daily bread; and you are esteemed even though the general crowd may have passed you by. Those two modern idolatries, worship of the god Success and of the Golden Calf, are not popular Parisian cults. The Frenchman does not take you up because someone else has spoken highly of your work or because you have had your name and your picture in the papers. The newspapers themselves do not run into personalities. A man's private life is regarded as something that concerns himself alone. A Baron de Rothschild

may go to the theater or to the race course without having it reported in the papers that he spoke to an actress or how much money he won or lost in betting on his horses. Photographers are not permitted to dog his footsteps. If they tried to do so he would only have to complain to the nearest policeman; and the same protection of a man's privacy would be accorded to a peasant.

Snobbery belongs to the foreign colony. The very word to express it, curiously Gallicized into "*snobisme*," has been imported into the French language from our own tongue. The social climber is also the product of other lands. In France a person's social position is determined by who he is and what he is, and Frenchmen are content that it should be so. A President of France may be and has been the son of a peasant; he is not looked down upon for that. He may be excluded from the salons of the aristocracy who hold aloof from the republican régime, but the exclusion is taken for granted and the President does not try to go where he is not wanted nor eat his heart out because commingling with the aristocracy is denied him. All that was decreed before he was born and he has no wish to change it. In France there is a society of blood and a society of intellect and a society of politics, and the three are distinct. There is no society of the merely rich.

Even the Discoverers have found out that Paris is really beautiful, but so often they qualify the fact with the opinion: "It is too much of a show city. To live in Paris is like living in a perpetual World's Fair!" Live in Paris year in and year out; in the spring when the city is gay with the animation of its people, when the new green is in the trees and upon the grass; in the summer when Fashion has fled and the avenues lie deserted in the bright, warm sunshine and all the world at night is out of doors; in the fall when the trees are golden in parks and boulevards and the soft rain falls gently on the wooden pavements; in the winter when the rare snow comes down from gray skies and the mornings are filled with mist, you will learn then

that Paris has no season when it is not beautiful and that it is only when seen thus familiarly, as it were, that the perfection of the work of the generations of artists who have created the city becomes truly apparent. Go where you will at any hour you choose and Paris has something attractive to offer to the sight. Wherever you may live the drive home will become a pleasure of which you will never tire.

You will learn that, despite the *obiter dictum* of the Little Discoverers, intimate association with the beauty of Paris only increases your appreciation of it. The buildings or the vistas which the Discoverers and the Tourists are led by the hand "for to see and to admire" become infinitely more attractive when they are the natural accompaniments of a daily drive or walk. There are no long, naked streets with the fronts of

uninteresting houses stretching on and on with depressing monotony. Long, straight, treeless streets do not exist; the artists in Paris saw to that. There are no towering buildings to hide the heavens from those on foot; there are no jagged lines to make jigsaw puzzles of the sky. In Paris there is uniformity without monotony, uniformity that comes from having an artistic standard to approach. Each turning of the street discloses a new vista so that familiarity does not breed weariness. The charm of Paris grows upon one: not the Paris of the Discoverers, Montmartre and the Boulevards, nor the Paris of the Tourists, the Paris of Monuments. One easily becomes disgusted with the one and might soon tire of the other; but for the real Paris, as for a real friend, one's affection increases the longer the association endures.



LILITH

By Maurice Browne

AT the day dawn of dream and desire,
 Ere chaos and law were met,
 'Mid the shadowy spaces higher
 Than heaven a rose was set,
 And the rose's petals were wet,
 But the heart of the rose was fire.

For the rose's heart was desire,
 And the rose's petals were dreams;
 And the guerdon of longing is fire,
 And tears are the guerdon, it seems,
 The immutable guerdon of dreams;
 But they quench not the flame of desire.

Nor to render them dry doth the fire
 Of longing ever avail.
 So dream with desire, and desire
 With dream wrought, who should prevail;
 And the fruit of their sore travail
 Was a woman—was tears and fire.

THE FUGITIVE

By Walt Mason

RENOWNED, wise and witty, a prince among men, he fled from the city and sought for a glen, where no one could find him this side of the grave—left splendor behind him, to dwell in a cave! Alone in the forest he hankered to dwell, forgetting the sorest of woes that befell, with feathery friskers and beasts in fur garbs, a-growing long whiskers and living on yarbs!

I met him one day in his hermitage lone, about the woods straying and gnawing a bone. A desolate figure he certainly was; as black as a Digger his face and has paws; his tatters were sailing about in the breeze; his whiskers were trailing clear down to his knees.

"Why have you deserted," I queried, "the throng, where Fortune has flirted and played with you long? Why have you forsaken the comforts of town—the eggs and the bacon and bread white and brown, the viands which quicken the spirits that droop, the roasted spring chicken, the mock turtle soup? Why are you eschewin' the world and its goods, to live like a bruin out here in the woods?"

The hermit surveyed me with woe in his eye. "Misfortune has made me the wreck you descry. A brave, earnest toiler, I strove up to fame, and then the despoiler caught me with his game, and only this stunt or its like would avail—the autograph hunter was hot on my trail."



THE AWAKENING

By Arthur Stringer

WE saw love go as softly as it came;
It died for us not darkly in a day;
It burned not out in one consuming flame,
Nor crowned with twilit glories passed away.
No grim hand came to strip that tender tree;
No leaf was torn away. But far below
The murmuring leafage, where no eye might see
Upon some root there fell the secret blow.
Then suddenly amid the startled green
That whispers swayed and shadowy glories crowned,
A something fell away, a beauty furred,
A withering blight set in. And unforeseen
Of all but that one canker underground,
Our love stood naked to the empty world!

NOT FOR EXHIBITION

By Ernest P. Pearce

LADY WISHFORD'S treacle moon was over. She was back in town. The information was conveyed to me in a note, which also contained a request for my attendance on her at once. Within half an hour of receiving the letter I was in a cab on my way to Green Street, Park Lane.

"What a dear boy you are to come at once!" said Lady Wishford as I took both her hands.

"I've had a fearfully dull time for the past month," I said. "I simply—"

"Don't be foolish. It's no good, is it, Watts?"

"No, Edith," I ventured.

"Why are you wearing the mauve tie?" she asked nonchalantly.

"It's for a sweet little friend who has gone and got married."

"Are we not friends still then?" she inquired.

"Most decidedly we are. It's only my buffoonery."

"I say, Watts, I want you to do some—or, rather, I want some advice," she continued.

"Nothing serious, I hope? So soon, too!"

"No—er—not exactly."

"Pray proceed. I'm all attention."

"Duke has gone to lay a stone somewhere, and he suggested that I have you here," said Edith. "Duke" is her husband, Lord Wishford, and he was so called in appreciation of his Wellington-like proboscis.

"And what am I to do? Take you on to Mrs. Winter's dance?"

"Certainly not, Watts," said she severely. "Let's have tea, and we can talk over the cups," she added.

"Yes, let's."

When the tea was served, I took a chair opposite Edith.

"Not there, please, Watts. You are not my husband. Take this chair," suggested the charmer, indicating the one next her own.

"But I can see you better here," I protested. My hostess looked a trifle vexed, and I regretted my ill timed joking. Without another word I moved to the seat indicated.

"I want you to help me, Watts. We have always been such good chums, and you—er—understand me a bit by now, don't you?"

"But surely—"

"I know what you are going to say, but I cannot go to Duke yet, and so—well, I just decided to tell you."

I nodded approvingly.

"Do you know Simmonds, the Academician?" she continued.

"Not very well. I heard you mention his name several times when you were sitting."

"Not too loud," she whispered.

"I beg your pardon; I will be more cautious."

"It's all right, only—well, you understand, don't you?"

"Exactly."

"I met Simmonds yesterday," continued Edith, "and in the most matter-of-fact way he said he purposed sending his 'Persephone' to the Academy."

"You of course had to extract that information from him."

"Rather; he was as reticent as ever."

"Why are you concerned about the work being exhibited? Duke knows you were a model," said I.

"Watts, you don't mean to say you've forgotten? I told you all about it

months ago," said Edith with much vehemence.

"I'm awfully sorry, but I must admit having clean forgotten the thing." Edith's commiseration for my execrable memory was conveyed in the sigh that followed.

"You have always understood," she continued, "that I used to sit for head and shoulders only."

"Quite."

"Duke is under that impression, too," she added. I nodded, and drew forth my cigarette case.

"When Simmonds was doing his 'Persophone' he asked me to sit for the figure."

"Yes—I remember now your telling me about it," I said as I gave her a light.

"You know all about it, but Duke doesn't."

"But surely you will not be squeamish about telling him."

"I should prefer not to, if it can be avoided."

"And I take it that I am called upon to suggest a way out—a course which will prevent the picture getting into the show, and incidentally save Duke the trouble of an inquiry."

"Yes, Watts, what can we do?"

"How about having Simmonds to tea? Can't you fuss round him a bit, and persuade him to do your bidding? He will listen to you, I feel sure," I said.

"Do you think so?" asked Edith in a voice that showed that she did not.

"I have no doubt about it."

"As you seem so certain, I'll ask him to come on Thursday," she continued.

"Let me know how you get on, won't you?"

"I'll ring you up the same night. You know Duke's a good boy, but I don't think—well—er—you know he might be concerned about my sitting for a full figure. He's rather staid—er—well, you know."

"You probably know him a little by now," I suggested as I got up to go.

As she held out both hands, she looked at me in such—oh, hang it, you know how they look!

II

ON Thursday evening I remained in my chambers, but no message from Edith did I receive. I reflected that Simmonds had agreed to her request, and in the ecstasy of her triumph she had overlooked me. I waited on in vain. Suddenly I jumped to my feet; an apparently brilliant idea had occurred to me. "Why not have the picture myself?" I asked, and as there was no one to disagree, the suggestion was carried. I reflected that the work would serve as a memento of halcyon days which were in danger of being forgotten. The more I considered the matter, the more did I desire to possess the canvas; and by the time I left for the club I had decided to buy it, if the price were within reason.

The next day I went to Tite Street armed with an introduction to the famous Simmonds. An artist friend had accommodated me by explaining that I was a man of letters engaged on a work covering contemporary art. On arriving at the studio I sent this harmless bluff in to the Shah, but it must have adversely influenced him, for he kept me waiting some time. There was a paltry delay of just an hour before I was conducted to the studio. I found the painter at work, his model posed on the throne. As I entered he left his canvas and came toward me.

"You are a friend of young Lupton, eh?" he opened in the most affable of tones.

"We were at St. John's together," I ventured.

"Good painter, Lupton—very good man."

I smiled in approbation of the tribute to my friend.

"He assured me that I should learn a good deal off you," I continued, marveling the while at my audacious invention.

"It all depends on how much you know already."

My heart fell. I realized that I was in danger of being caught as a tyro.

"Have you many pictures here?" I inquired.

"Only one or two; all of them are fairly modern." He moved over to some veiled pictures, and I followed with notebook in hand.

"This 'Madonna' I painted last year, but I have not yet exhibited it," he observed as he unveiled a canvas. I started perceptibly; there was Edith's face. "She was the model for this, and she never told me," I murmured as I regarded the masterpiece. For masterpiece it was; although I was no art critic, I realized this, and appreciated the bold lines and the fine drawing.

He showed me in course several landscapes, all of which impressed me by their wonderful color and fine light and shade effects. As I stood before them, I realized that I was with an artist who worked with elaborate care, and whose work merited all the attention it had received. He painted for art's sake: chill penury had never driven him to the production of "pot boilers."

"I have only one more work to show you, a 'Persephone,'" he continued. My heart beat faster as he withdrew the veil.

"As a matter of fact," he added, "I thought of sending it to Burlington House this year, but have decided to withhold it."

I at once concluded that Edith had persuaded him to keep it out of the show. The veil was removed, and there stood his glorious "Persephone."

That Edith had been the model was beyond all doubt. The picture fascinated me; it was alive. The painting was scholarly and finished. There were no signs of hurried work. The canvas, to my uncritical eye, was of the highest order. I was enraptured with it, and intoxicated with its beauty.

The rest of the interesting lecture, I regret, was lost on me: my mind was on the picture and the price I should probably have to pay for it. The artist was very kind, sagacious and tolerable; any hesitation on my part in replying to his questions was overcome by his helping me out. As I was going he asked: "Are you undertaking the work you have in hand alone?"

"Oh, quite," I replied.

"You have not been an art critic, of course?" I was forced to admit that I had not, but I would have given a year's income to have been able to say yes.

"You have a big task in hand. Come to see me if you want any advice," he added as I left him.

The next day I wrote a note asking if he were willing to sell his "Persephone," and at what price. In a few days I received his reply. He was quite ready to let the picture go, but at a price which startled me. Some days elapsed before I could make up my mind to buy the thing. When I had decided, I sent a cheque with a request that the picture should be delivered to my chambers at once.

I met Edith immediately afterward at Mrs. Lang's dance.

"Well, how's the horizon?" I asked.

"Oh, er—I'm much better now," she assured me, her face radiant with pleasure.

"What! Unwell? I had no idea."

"It's the reaction, and er—the little worry about Simmonds's picture."

"Did you see Simmonds?" I asked anxiously.

"Oh, yes. Didn't you know? He was such a dear, and promised to do anything."

"Very good of him," I observed rather severely.

"Why, I believe you're vexed because I'm happy."

"Not at all; only I just remembered that you promised to let me know about the interview with Simmonds—and you didn't."

"What are you two chatting about? It's my dance, too, Edith." It was Duke. I shook his hand hastily, and left him to find my partner.

III

I WAS in my study when my man came in to tell me that the picture had arrived.

"Bring it in here for the present, and leave it wrapped up."

"Very good, sir."

In a few minutes the thing was carried in and placed on the ground. Tak-

ing a knife, I cut the string, and hastily pulled off the wrapping. There she was in all her beauty. I placed it against the wall, and stepped back to admire it. Before I had time to turn, the door opened and in walked Duke.

"Hello, old man! By Gad, what's all

this? Why, it's the very thing I was going to buy for Edith!"

"You have seen it before, then?"

"Oh, yes, several times, in the studio."

If he wants to see it now, he will have to come to my rooms.



TANGLED TRUISMS

By Edward Fraser Carson

THE road to hell is paved with good intentions, and the pavement makes smooth riding.

Only the brave deserve the fair. They'll need all their courage, too, when they get their deserts. Ask the married men.

Every cloud has a silver lining, maybe, but the trouble is the lining doesn't show.

As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined, or would be, if trees grew from twigs.

Money makes the mare go, but she'll hit up twice the speed if you are just too late to get it placed.

Pride goeth before a fall. Well, let her go—no one'll miss her.

One swallow doesn't make a summer, but temperance lecturers will tell you it goes before the fall.



MODEST DESIRES

By Irma Caspary

SOME new light fiction 'neath a shady tree,
Some cooling drinks and sandwiches, and thou
Fanning the flies from my perspiring brow,
E'en city park were paradise for me.

AN OLD-FASHIONED TYPE

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

FOR "Mabel Brown" I never cared
 (My rightful name by birth),
 But when the name of Smith I shared,
 I seemed to own the earth.
(I wrote it without "y" or "e"—
Plain "Mrs. Jack Smith" suited me.)

My happiest hour, as I look back
 On times of great content,
Was when folks called me "Mrs. Jack,"
 Though "Mrs. Smith" was meant.
It was the pleasure of my life
To hear them say: "That's Jack Smith's wife."

One day I joined a club. They said
 That I must speak or write.
So I did both. I wrote and read
 A speech one fateful night.
It made a hit, but proved, alack,
A death blow to poor "Mrs. Jack."

As "Mrs. Mabel Smith" I'm known
 Throughout my town and State;
My heart feels widowed and alone;
 The case is intricate.
Though darling Jack is mine, the same,
I am divorced somehow in name.

Just "Mabel Smith" I can endure;
 It leaves the world in doubt;
But "Mrs." makes the marriage sure,
 Yet leaves the husband out.
It sounds like Reno, or the tomb,
And always fills me full of gloom.

They say the honors are all mine;
 Well, I would trade the pack
For one sweet year in which to shine
 Again as "Mrs. Jack."
That gave to life a core, a pith,
Not found by "Mrs. Mabel Smith."

THE SMART SET

For one suggests the chosen mate,
 And all the joy love brings;
 And one suggests a delegate
 To federated things.
 I'm built upon the old-time plan—
 I like to supplement a man.

If on each point of glory's star
 My name shone like a pearl,
 I'd feel a pleasure greater far
 In being "Jack Smith's girl."
 It is ridiculous, I know,
 But then, you see, I'm fashioned so.



RETROSPECTION

By Clinton Scollard

DO you remember, love, the autumn moon
 Upon the sea one twilight long ago,
 And how the tide in languid ebb and flow
 Upon the beaches murmured a low tune?
 Soft was the air as on an eve in June
 When lilies burgeon and when roses blow;
 Like grains of gold the bright sands seemed to glow,
 A wondrous treasure in each shining dune!

Do you recall the pathway that the light
 Cast on the waters—how it shimmered far
 To the horizon where one violet star
 Beckoned to us in such enchanting wise?
 Ah, love, the haloed memory of that night
 Is like a little dream of paradise!



HE who flirts and runs away is surely stung some other day.



DON'T jump at conclusions, for the novelist is likely to fool you with an artistic ending.

BUTTER, EGGS AND A BARONESS

By William J. Lampton

“**W**HAT'RE eggs today?”
“Eighteen cents.”
“How's butter?”

“Strong”—and both men laughed at the antiquity of the thing.

Peter Stuyvesant Higgins shivered and turned away. Yet it was a harmless enough conversation between a commission merchant and a customer in lower Warren Street, and was redolent of the business. But it jarred upon the sensitive soul of P. S. Higgins. He had been in that line once himself, and wanted to forget it. He was fifty-five, a bachelor; and ten fat years in Wall Street had brought him ten times as much money as all his years of hard work in Warren Street. Naturally luck had the call over hard work; even better men than he would admit that.

Nor had Mr. Higgins devoted all his time to the sordid pursuits of mere money. With no patent of nobility except his Christian name, bestowed by parents who had no more to give him, he had always felt that he must live up to it. He had been ambitious to become rich, but he wanted something more—education, social position and the other evidences of gentle breeding. The education he acquired, after a successful course in the public schools, by reading, by lectures, through museums of art and the innumerable other avenues open to every aspiring creature in the metropolis. In later years he had traveled some and had mingled in the society of summer resorts, but with it all he had failed to acquire the New York social position which he craved and which had at last come to be his whole desire. That was the spirit, strong behind his springing hopes, which made him turn away with a shudder

when he heard the sort of talk that was once the language he had spoken.

One day Peter read in the humorous department of his favorite evening paper this simple couplet:

You may break, you may shatter
The shell if you will,
But the scent of the egg
Will cling to it still,

and a light of revelation seemed to blaze out of it and fall upon him. In New York, whatever his efforts, whatever his accomplishments, however he might crush the shell, the scent of the egg would remain. Therefore New York was not the place for him to attain the goal for which he longed. Europe was the sphere of his successful future. Thither he would go, and thither he went.

He had been at Baden-Baden almost a month—Baden-Baden was not a center of fashion, so to say, but he was shy of the glittering spots until he had become Europe wise—and he had spent lonely hours wandering about with plenty of money and the will to spend, but without knowing how to place it where it would do the most good. Peter was more than ready to give up, but he wanted returns for it. He had learned that in Warren Street, which was one reason he had lived through Wall Street.

He had met several people casually, men chiefly, and foreigners, to whom he had loosened his pursestrings so agreeably that they had begun to seek him, but he had been shy of the women. He had always been so, and now more than ever, because he understood that they were the social arbiters and he realized that he must know the proper sort or all his efforts would be of no avail. There

was one woman he had seen about the springs and baths who impressed him. She was gray-haired and elegant in person, manner and attire, and that indescribable something which proclaims blood was manifest even to Mr. Higgins. Who she was he did not know, and he knew no one well enough to make inquiries. He had, in his own primitive, elemental fashion, determined that this woman should be his social mentor, and he was waiting for opportunity to bring about the desired result.

One morning Peter had left his motor car, a European acquisition, or innovation, if you please, for he had never owned one in New York, near the Conversationhaus while he went in to find someone to ride with him. At the foot of the steps leading to the main floor he met the lady of his dreams coming down. After he had passed her he heard a slight scream, and turning, saw her falling. Peter sprang to her assistance with the gallantry of a gentleman of the old school. Her ankle had twisted and she had dropped to the gravel walk before Peter reached her. He helped her to her feet with eager inquiries.

"Thank you very much," she said in excellent English. "I am not hurt, though rather frightened, and the fall was not pleasant."

"Are you sure you are not hurt?" Peter insisted.

"Quite, but wait until I see how well I can walk on this ankle," and she laughed lightly.

Peter took her arm and she stepped out bravely, but with her full weight on her foot came a twinge of pain, and her face went into numerous little wrinkles of protest.

"Oh!" exclaimed the sympathetic Peter.

"Thank you," she laughed. "It is a little worse than I thought, and if you will be kind enough to call a carriage I will return to my hotel."

Peter was on the point of hailing a waiting vehicle when his eye fell upon his new car—he had owned it for so short a time that it had not yet become a habit. He thanked all his lucky stars he had bought that car and that it was

as fine a one as he could buy. There it stood all a-glitter, and though at times he might have wondered what real use he had for such an incumbrance, he knew now clearly, and the wonder of it went glimmering. This were indeed usefulness enough if it never turned a wheel again. Yet with his sense of exultation came a depressing thought as to the propriety of offering his car to a lady to whom he had not been formally presented. But there was no time to split hairs. This was a case of suffering humanity.

"I beg your pardon"—he hesitated and reddened; "my car is here, and if you will take it I shall be delighted to place it at your service. Permit me to assist you to it."

"You are more than kind," she smiled at him, accepting his invitation and his extended arm; "and I shall never forget how gallantly you have come to my rescue. Really, I think Providence must have sent you."

Peter blushed and stammered. That she was so ready to accept his offer did not occur to him as anything unusual for Continental conventions. He placed her in the car and told the chauffeur to drive her to her hotel.

"But you will go with me, won't you?" she said.

"Do you wish me to?" he asked.

"Oh, you American men!" she laughed. "I have heard of your diffidence."

Peter was too happy to argue and took the seat beside her.

"To the Hotel Weiss," she commanded, and Peter repeated the direction to the chauffeur.

"And why, pray," he said, when they were fully under way, "did you think I was an American? Possibly I am English, don't you know?"

She shrugged her shoulders.

"No, no, my friend," she said, "yours is not the English manner. Besides, I know quite a few Americans. Indeed, I have been in your great country; I spent there a whole year."

What other revelations she might have made were prevented by the stopping of the car in front of a small hotel, scarcely better than a *pension*. Peter remotely expected something more preten-

tious, but he had heard of the modesty of the really cultured, and this was an evidence satisfactory to him of genuine superiority. He was tempted to ask her to accompany him farther in a drive, as her injuries did not seem to be disturbing her seriously, but he feared to go too far along an untried path. She required his assistance to the door, and as it was opened he stood expectant, not knowing definitely what he should with propriety do next.

"I must thank you again," she said effusively. "Without you I do not know what would have been my fate."

"Don't mention it—don't mention it, madame," Peter protested, with a bow as low and sweeping as the narrow doorway permitted. "I shall be only too happy to place myself at your service whenever you may need me. My regret is that I may not see you again."

"Are you leaving Baden?" she asked.

"Oh, no, but—but—" Peter hesitated.

"American, diffident American always!" she laughed. "If you wish to call on me in my humble lodgings, I shall be very glad."

"That is more than I could have dared ask, my dear madame, but in the excitement of the moment, I have—that is to say, I am—that is, how can I call when I do not know your name?"

"Nor I yours," she laughed back at him with engaging coquetry.

Peter drew out a card, and the lady gave him hers. He looked at it and his veins tingled.

"Baroness Elffingen," he read. A real baroness, the first that Peter had ever seen at close range; and under great obligations to him, plain Peter S. Higgins, one time dealer in butter and eggs in New York City! He could scarcely conceal his emotions as he went away, leaving his promise to call in the evening and inquire concerning her health.

He thought of preceding his call with flowers, a little something dainty and delicious for an invalid perhaps; but he wished to keep well within the magic circle of the very *comme il faut*, and he hesitated. He did not even go in his car. The distance was not great, and he walked it very modestly, yet with an

inward sense that he was stepping along the social way he long had sought. A baroness his social guide, counselor and friend; what more might she not be? She was not more than forty, handsome, elegant, a widow—but Peter blushed and only dreamed the rest.

The Baroness received him in her suite seated in a chair of state, as it appeared to Peter, with her crippled foot bolstered up on a footstool, and she was most gracious. Peter was airy in his compliments and persiflage. It seemed almost too good to be true to be received by one of the nobility as though he had been to the manner born. Their conversation for the first few moments was upon the accident of the morning, and then it became more generally personal.

"You said this morning, Baroness"—Peter had been practising on that word—"that you had lived a year in the United States, did you not?"

"Oh, yes. And the charming people I met! But I liked New York best."

"And you know many Americans?"

"Oh, yes, many of the other days and many of today. I like the Americans very much indeed."

"Possibly you may know one, now in this country, whom I once knew. She is the Princess Doylewski."

Peter lingered lovingly over the title. He was talking to a baroness, but a princess was even more exalted.

"Oh, yes," she replied rather superciliously—"a Russian princess."

"Yes, and a great lady," said Peter.

"The Princess is a dear friend of mine, and I admire her extravagantly, but you would know if you had lived among us very long that a Russian prince is not what other princes are, however charming his wife may be. A Russian prince is not greatly superior in rank, I imagine, to your colonels of Kentucky and your majors of Georgia."

"Indeed! I did not know," said Peter, quite abashed and inclined not to put his trust in princes.

"But do not take it to heart, you dear American nobleman," sympathized the Baroness, patting him on the arm. "Your friend is a princess in her own right, for she is a good and noble woman."

Besides, she is a great favorite in the most exclusive circles on the Continent."

Peter bowed his appreciation but said nothing. He might have told the Baroness that when he knew the present Princess she was the daughter of a farmer from whom he had once bought butter and eggs. Later she had come to the city as a stenographer at a hotel where she met and captivated the Prince. Peter remembered her vaguely as a pretty and pert young country girl whom he would have long since forgotten had she not made herself worthy of his remembrance by marrying a title. It had been a runaway match, and had caused some little flurry in the newspapers, but as no scandal attached, no prominent society persons were involved and the foreigner was really a gentleman able to support his wife in his own home, public interest did not last even the usual nine days. Peter told the Baroness most of the story, but he represented the girl's father as a landed proprietor and made no mention of butter and eggs, while, according to Peter, the elopement was a real romance.

"You wouldn't know the Princess now, I'll venture," said the Baroness.

"It has been nineteen years, and she was eighteen then," Peter said; "and I presume the woman of thirty-seven is hardly what the girl of eighteen was. Then, too, I saw her only at intervals with her father, a most admirable man, who died a year or two after his daughter's marriage."

The Baroness sighed profoundly.

"The Princess," she said, "has had no little trouble, though her husband has been quite up to the standard of the better class of husbands, and she has changed much, I fancy, though I have known her only during the past five or six years. There is some silver in her hair, and I had imagined she was a little older than thirty-seven. However, you shall see her soon, for she is coming here; and I know the renewal of your acquaintance will be delightful to her."

"Not less to me, I assure you," exclaimed Peter with enthusiasm, "and whatever I can do to enhance the pleasure of the Princess's visit shall be done."

"Which is not small, I am sure," said the Baroness, just a shade inquisitively.

"I hope it will be equal to any and all demands made upon it, my dear Baroness, and that you will not hesitate to suggest anything which I may overlook," responded Peter. "I may tell you in confidence that I am not well posted on society methods and manners, being a plain business man."

"Really, my dear friend," she twitted, "you have the manners of a courier. It was because of that that I was not sure at first you were an American."

"Oh," he laughed, "you have cornered me, my dear Baroness. How can I thank you for the compliment to myself without endorsing your condemnation of my countrymen?"

"Thank me for my frankness, my friend," smiled the Baroness gently. "I like Americans in spite of their faults."

Two days later Peter was at the station with his car to meet the Princess. He would never have known her, but she was delighted to meet him, and he thought her a remarkably handsome woman. Her knowledge of New York astonished Peter, and he was proud that she had not lost her Americanism in her foreign surroundings.

They did not go to the modest little hotel where the Baroness had been staying, but to the *Französischer Hof*, as Peter's guests. The Baroness had discreetly hinted that she was almost ashamed to take the Princess to her humble lodgings, and had said how happy she would be if she were rich enough to receive the Princess in one of the fashionable hotels; and Peter had ingenuously risen to the occasion. Furthermore he ventured to offer the Baroness ten hundred-mark notes to pay such incidental expenses as would be sure to arise. The Baroness hesitated at first, but at last permitted him to force the money upon her.

He dined with the ladies that evening, going afterward to the *Conversationhaus* to hear the music, and Peter began to feel the thrill of wealth and social position in the proper combination. The Princess was vivacious and winsome, and Peter was delighted.

The Princess, being tired after her journey, returned to the hotel early and went to her apartment, leaving the Baroness to talk over their social campaign with Peter.

"My friend," said the Baroness, when they had found a sofa in the corner to themselves, "the Princess has told me much about you which you are too modest to say for yourself, but nothing she could say would be more convincing than what I have seen myself—you are truly a nobleman, and far more deserving of a title than most of us who have them."

Peter fluttered with pride and kissed her hand.

"My dear Baroness," he begged, "don't mention it—please don't mention it. If I am so lucky as to be able to do you a good turn, let us both rejoice at our fortune and make the most of it. We want the Princess to have the time of her life; how shall we go about it?"

"Oh, you Americans!" cooed the Baroness captivately. "Now what more can I ask you to do when you have done so much?"

"Tut, tut," said Peter, waving it all aside; "we haven't started yet. Now, listen; I notice that the Princess knows a good many titled people around here, judging from the names she mentioned during the concert. You know I'm a bit short on that brand, and I'll put up the money if you and she will deliver the goods." The Baroness held up her hands in horror. "Oh, I beg your pardon," he apologized, shocked at his own carelessness. "You see, you and I have become such good friends that I talked freely, and I fear fell into the manner of all of us Americans at home when we think we see a good thing and go after it."

"Oh, you Americans!" smiled the Baroness, quite placated by his rather incongruous apology. "What do you propose? I have several things in mind, and one in particular, but I want you to say first what you wish."

"You are my social leader, guide, counselor and friend, Baroness," Peter assured her, "but if I had my way, I'd say let's give the Princess a chance to

hold a big reception here in the hotel and invite everybody she knows. How's that?"

"The very one thing I wanted most, you fascinating mind reader!" exclaimed the Baroness. "But—but—" She hesitated and a shadow crossed her face. "Oh, my friend, the cost of it!" she finished, with tears in her voice.

"Piffle!" snorted Peter. "The cost doesn't count. Society never has cost me anything, and it's about time I was beginning to chip in my share. How much will you need to do it right?"

If the Baroness had imagined that Peter was of the courtier type who in grandiose fashion waved expense aside and ordered the work to go on regardless, she did not indicate it in any way. She accepted his plain business methods and gave herself to a mental calculation for as much as two minutes.

"My friend," she said after she had summed up the total, "I am afraid to tell you."

"Tush, tush, my dear Baroness!" encouraged Peter. "What are you afraid of?"

"I am afraid," she hesitated, "that your generosity and gallantry will prompt you to ignore pecuniary considerations and give the reception, no matter what it may cost."

"Now, now, my dear lady," Peter protested, "you think too well of me. Go on and give me the figures, or an estimate, at least."

The Baroness smiled and tapped him on the wrist with her fan.

"Oh, you Americans!" she said.

"Oh, you women!" laughed Peter. "How you do love to spend money and hate to think of the arithmetic of it! Tell me what you want for expenses."

The Baroness was very deliberate, now that she was confronted with a plain business proposition.

"My friend," she said, "this reception will cost you"—she held the end of a dainty finger to her forehead—"it will cost you twenty thousand—" and the Baroness paused, watching him meanwhile.

Peter gasped. Twenty thousand at one bound was going most too far, but

the Baroness, after her brief pause went on:

"Twenty thousand marks."

"Oh!" he said with a great feeling of relief. "That's five thousand dollars. Not an impossible sum, especially as I am getting value received. If it can be done in good shape for five thousand, go ahead, my dear Baroness, and don't let the expense stop you a minute. If you need more, you know where you can get it."

The next day the Princess Doyley, the Baroness Elfingen and Mr. Peter Stuyvesant Higgins drove for three hours in Mr. Higgins's car and the ladies enjoyed it no less than he. The Princess protested strenuously against his proposed plan for her entertainment, but Mr. Higgins's persuasions finally overcame her scruples and she submitted. It was decided that the reception should be held within the week, as the Princess's stay was limited, and Peter told the Baroness to begin at once with her preparations as she was to have entire charge of the affair.

Peter dreamed of music and floating fairies in a dance that night, and the next day received a telegram calling him to London at once. The ladies were in a flutter because he did not know how long he might be away. They did not know what they should do without him, but he quickly put their minds at rest by placing five thousand dollars to the credit of the Baroness with the hotel management. He also instructed the management to follow her directions in the matter of preparing for the reception, and he would be responsible for whatever she might do. He also placed his car and chauffeur subject to her orders.

The telegram which Peter had received was somewhat disturbing. It bore the name of a New Yorker with whom he was interested in a large financial transaction which had caused him some previous worry, and asked him to come at once to London and meet the sender at the Hotel Savoy. Peter, understanding that social and business affairs bore no relation to each other, said nothing to the ladies of the nature of his unwelcome telegram except that it was a matter of

business. The Princess was inclined to the opinion that Peter was deceiving them and twitted him coyly about the lady in the case, but Peter emphatically denied the soft impeachment and showed them the telegram in proof.

Arriving at London, Peter was somewhat nonplused to find that his business associate was not there. Neither was there letter nor telegram, then or later in the day, and he went to bed that night disappointed and in bad humor. The only consolation he found was in a telegram he sent to the Baroness. He dreamed of Baden and its promised conquests, and felt better in the morning. At ten o'clock he had a wire from the New Yorker in Paris to the effect that he had been called there suddenly, but would return Saturday. Saturday, indeed! Peter fumed and swore. Saturday was the day of the grand affair at Baden-Baden, and no business on earth should break in on that. He had only time, as it was, to get there, and he would not delay, whatever happened to the business. Wavering between dollars and delights, Peter was in a frightful state of mind till noon, when another telegram came. It was from the New Yorker, and read: "Strange news for you. Meet me at Baden as soon as possible."

Peter was completely bewildered; he wired his friend at Baden, caught a train for Southampton and hurried away to the Continent. The hours spent in transit were anything but quieting, though he was going to the one spot on earth most attractive to him, and at the station he was met by the hotel manager, who appeared to be suffering with an aggravated case of hysteria. He seized Peter as soon as he stepped on the platform and began spluttering:

"Oh, sir, the Baroness—the Princess—"

"Well," cried the exasperated Peter, shaking him loose, "what the devil is the matter with you? Are they dead? What's happened?"

The manager could only splutter and make signs.

"What's the matter with you, man?" urged Peter. "Can't you talk? Can't you tell me what's wrong?"

"Oh, yes, sir," the manager succeeded in saying. "I will tell you all. But come to the carriage."

The agitated manager dragged Peter to the carriage, pushed him in and they set off to the hotel. On the way Peter learned the whole dreadful tale of horror. The Baroness and Princess had left the hotel the day after he had gone; they had taken all the money and ten thousand marks additional, all he was willing to let them have; they had not paid their bills; they had left only empty trunks; they had sent his chauffeur off to Mannheim on a fool's errand, and they had taken the car off with them in charge of a chauffeur who seemed to be a friend of the Princess!

"Anything more?" inquired Peter, hard as nails when the frightful truth had been driven into him and clinched.

The manager was utterly unable to reply except in splutters.

Peter's emotions were such that he could give them no expression. In the language of his own land, he was "paralyzed speechless." The manager's story needed no verifying, but the empty trunks were shown, and the chauffeur told how he had gone to Mannheim to find nothing and had walked back, as his pocketbook with his month's salary

had mysteriously disappeared when the strange chauffeur had taken him to the train. A letter to Mr. Peter Stuyvesant Higgins, postmarked Paris, was waiting for him. He retired to a quiet place to read it. It ran as follows:

DEAR OLD HIGGIE:

Aren't you the kind man and the easy mark! It was a shame to string you like that, but what are two nice ladies who need money to do when it is nodding to them to come and get it? Did you meet your friend in London? The Savoy's a nice hotel, isn't it? But we don't stop there any more. Were you lonesome without us? Really Higgie, we are sorry we couldn't stay and pull the show off for you and get you into the swagger push, but we had another date. We are leaving Paris as soon as this letter is mailed. Sorry we can't give you our next address. We missed you on our ride to Paris and frequently spoke of you, saying how much we were indebted to you. We sold the car to a friend. We had no idea it was worth so much, but then, Higgie, you always did like the best, didn't you?

Now, good-bye, Higgie. Be a good boy and go back to little old New York, where you belong. Europe is too big for you. When you hit the society wheel and swing up to the top where you want to be, wire us.

"Stung!" said Peter between his teeth, and he took a pencil and pad from his pocket to figure up the price. And Peter Stuyvesant Higgins went back to New York to live out his days as it had been appointed unto him to live.



BBROWN—You can always tell a young man who is just out of college.

JONES—That's just where you are wrong. You can't tell him anything.



TO keep up a good front one needs a good backing.



MANY a girl is on the shelf today because she kept a man on the rack yesterday.

IN ANNIHILATION'S WASTE

By Marguerite Neville

IT happened four years ago—four long, eternal years that have dragged themselves with weary feet across my life. I was young and rather foolish, and he was so wise and so dear, and I—well, I was poor and lonely, too, and then I loved him so.

So can you wonder that I tried to snatch one happy month from the hands of fate—one fleeting month of dreams stolen from a life of drab realities?

Then tomorrow came, as tomorrows do, if we can only wait. Sometimes they are happy, sometimes sad and sometimes wholly dull; but this one was happy, oh so happy!

Fancy *daring* to be happy!

The cottage was idyllic, standing alone on the edge of a cliff, holding on with both hands, so to say, for fear of falling off into the sea.

And as the night came down we stood together in the shadowed garden and watched the baby moon rise white and still from behind the pines, and the stocks smelt, oh, so sweet and yet sad somehow, and I thought of love and of death and of things that are too sad.

And the sea said, "Hush!" and we held each other close.

And it was all so beautiful that it hurt.

Oh, happy days that flew so quickly, on wings of sunshine and of moonlit nights! Oh, golden month so nearly fled away! Fold your wings and rest a while, for when you are gone he, too, will go, and I shall always be alone.

Always at night we watched the sunset flood the sky, and waited for the moon to swing high above the shadowing trees; and all the world waited, too, and the sea, and his eyes smiled at me. They were blue—so blue! They were like—oh, I don't know what they were like, only they were beautiful. Ah, me! So beautiful!

And then it was the last evening, and it rained a little because my dear was going away. I can smell the wet earth now, and the sound of the sea fills the dreary schoolroom; I can almost see his face that I shall never really see again, and his eyes that will never smile at me any more.

We went through the little wicket gate into the lane. I have always liked wicket gates—they are so pretty and so useless; and don't you *love* the way they click? And, turning, we looked at our little Cottage of Dreams in the twilight.

"Good-bye, dear, dear Cottage," I whispered.

And he said: "Yes, it wasn't a bad little place; we were awfully happy there."

Happy. Ah, love, if you knew!

"Twice one are two, twice two are four," drone the children.

"Twice three—" I say encouragingly.

And the rain patters on the window pane.

And this is my life.

IBRAHIM FADLALLAH, SOCIAL REFORMER

By Achmed Abdullah

“HELLO, old man, what’s the matter with your eye?” asked the American by way of greeting as he saw Ibrahim, whose left visual organ was tightly bandaged.

The Egyptian touched the bandage with a careful and caressing finger, smiling sadly and pensively. Then he drew a cigarette from behind his ear, lit it and inhaled deeply. Finally he said slowly and solemnly, as one about to utter portentous oracles:

“Purity is a snare of the Evil One; avoid purity. Virtue is a most fickle mistress; shun virtue.” Here a wistful look stole into his unbandaged eye. “For virtue crowns your head with rich virgin white madhavi flowers and with the crimson blossoms of the perfumed asoka. She talks to you in the minor key of sympathy and also in the resounding harmonies of flattery. She promises you the delights of Paradise to come. She snuggles softly against your heart—the vampire—and then she hits you over the head with considerably more than two pounds of brick, she claws at your eyes with sharp nails of cruelty, she calls you most vile names and robs you of your hard earned money. Yes, dear one, virtue is indeed a most fickle mistress. Avoid her as you would Eblis, the accursed and pig-faced father of lies.”

There was silence for a second, and then the American asked again: “But what about your eye?”

Ibrahim squinted with his good eye along the bridge of his nose to see if the bandage was still in place, and replied in accents of reproach:

“Know then, beloved one, that this eye, blackened, disfigured, useless for many a long day to come, that this eye is part of the penalty which I paid for endeavoring with all my feeble strength to transmute vice into resplendent purity. This eye is the retribution which fate meted out to me for listening to that serpent-tongued nephew of much evil, the black-frocked missionary who lives on the corner of Nahassim Street—may his unclean soul pass quickly into the dark!”

The American looked up in surprise. “Why, you don’t mean to say that Father Tenhagen is responsible for your bum eye?”

“Even so, my friend. You know how, ever since the Reverend Father came to town, the knocks of Western civilization have been heard louder and louder at the gates of this heretofore so peaceful little place. By the face of the Prophet—peace on him—but he is a great man, the Father Tenhagen—a strenuous man, a born leader and conqueror, with the power of persuasiveness and the genius of organization. It is hardly two months since his bulk darkened the portals of this village, and already he has formed a Social Reform League, a Temperance Society and a Christian Endeavor Club. And then, to crown it all, he founded the Association for the Rescue of Dancing Girls.

“He came to me, smiling the oily smile of sweetness, and he worked craftily on my yielding soul, as a potter’s hands fashion a bit of soft clay. He spoke to me of a good man’s mission in life. He seared my heart with burning

tales of the bitter prices which mankind pays to vice and which vice pays to mankind. He harrowed my bowels of compassion with the pictures of women who go wrong, who, pushed by men, tread the thorny path of shame and perdition. He spoke to me of the duty of every true man to rescue at least one woman of sin. Ah, tomorrow I shall assuredly spit into his accursed face, for he persuaded me to join his Rescue Association, to become a worker in the vineyard of good, as he called it. Yea, he forced me to pay my admission fee in good cash. And then, after he had pocketed my hard earned rupees, he praised my mastery of the Hindustani language. He extolled my knowledge of the natives, of their customs and many prejudices. He greased my soul with the stinking oil of flattery, and fool that I was, he made me promise that I would be his interpreter and envoy in the matter of a certain young dancing girl by the name of Madansena. He explained to me that the aim of the association is that each member shall receive a fallen woman into his house until such time as she is legally married or enabled to earn a decent livelihood. Now he, the missionary, does not speak the Hindustani language with the fluency necessary to discuss certain thin-skinned subjects without making blunders and worse than blunders. Neither is he sufficiently acquainted with the people's many peculiarities and prejudices to broach delicate questions which demand tact and an intimate knowledge of caste and the ways of caste. Furthermore, being a holy man pledged to celibacy, he quite ignores the snares in the heart of woman. All this he explained to me, and then he asked me to be the instrument through which he could reach the girl Madansena, whom he proposed to receive into his house and to rescue from a life of shame. I should pave the way gently, diplomatically; I should plant the seed of virtue and touch her withered heart with hands of softness. And then I should bring her duly prepared to his house, where he, the missionary, would do the rest, would put on the finishing touches of purification.

"And gladly I promised, for indeed I did not mind meeting the girl, having seen her often walk through the bazaar as a sultana amongst her subjects; and she is verily the possessor of ten thousand vivid charms. She is in the flower of her womanhood, being thirteen years of age. She is rich and lives in a house of splendor surrounded by a pleasure garden; for she is the particular friend of the wealthy banker Rohindhra Nath Bannerjee, who maintains her in a style befitting her beauty and accomplishments. She walks gracefully, like the young elephant; she is of ivory color, with a little adorable nose like the flower of the sesamum; her lips are like the new leaf of the mango and her teeth like the seeds of the ripe pomegranate; and Allah, how she dances—quivering, tantalizing, playing on your nerves with all the power and charm of her five senses—for she learned the art of dancing at the Durgapuja festival in Bengal. No, my friend, I did not mind meeting her—and so, knowing that there is nothing which woman despises more in man than blushing modesty, I boldly knocked at her gate one night when I knew that her banker friend had gone to Poona on business. She seemed pleased at my visit, and she prepared the betel leaf for me with agile fingers. I looked into her eyes and declared that never in my life had I tasted such an exquisite combination of betel, lime, areca and cardamums. Thus I paved the way gracefully and diplomatically, and after half an hour's sprightly conversation we were like old friends, laughing and chatting and chewing betel in a deep harmony of souls. But all the while I wondered how I should broach the subject which had brought me to her house, how I should tell her of the aims of the Association for the Rescue of Dancing Girls, how I should picture to her the benevolent intentions of the missionary in regard to her without offense to her nostrils. I pondered, and I quoted in my mind the lines of the poet Sadi:

"Better to lie with good intent,
Than tell the truth when harm is meant.

"I knew in my heart's heart that even a dancing girl has feelings which can be

hurt, and I did not find it within my soul to approach her with sanctimonious speeches, to harrow her fluttering heart with sermonizing descriptions of the punishments dealt out to sin in this life and in the life to come. I saw her as she was, a wicked woman, but still a woman. And I saw myself as I was, a man indeed, but a foolish man and a meddler. And I also thought that the wicked may be wise in their generation, but that the foolish never can. Still a word given is a word given, and there remained my rash promise to the missionary. And then inspiration came to my help, and suddenly I knew that the best I could do under the circumstances would be to get her into the missionary's house under a smooth pretext and to let the holy man himself wrestle with the devil which possessed her soul. Accordingly I told her that I had come to her as the emissary of a very great sahib who had seen and admired her, who in my hearing had declared her to be verily like the moon on the fourteenth day, and who—practical suggestion—had much money. Madansena listened, and when I proposed that she should accompany me at once to the house of the sahib, she smiled and answered that she was ready and anxious to go. She even, though this is of no importance, forced into my unwilling hands a string of pearls to pay me for my services in the

matter. Then she bathed and anointed her body and went with me.

"I ushered her into the house of the missionary and waited outside—ah, I didn't have to wait long. At first I could hear the oily accents of Father Tenhagen's voice, and a laughing reply—sudden silence—again the missionary sahib's voice, but this time raised to loud tones of thunder—then a shrill feminine shriek—then silence again and then of a sudden the sounds of much broken furniture. And just as I was about to depart quietly, being as you know an enemy of rows of all sorts, the door opened and the girl Madansena appeared. Verily she was a tigress, a female elephant, a living, quivering image of Kali, the goddess of destruction! She jumped on me. She hit me over the head with a large brick. She clawed at my eyes with fingers of cruelty. She snatched away my waistband and robbed me not only of the very pearls which she had forced on me half an hour before but also of many rupees which I had about me. She called me wretch and deceiver and traitor and hypocrite and descendant of a thousand shameless female ancestors."

There was a short silence, then Ibrahim touched again the bandage with a careful and caressing finger and said:

"Aye, dear one, virtue is indeed a fickle mistress; avoid her."



"IS he liberal in his views?"

"No, but he is broad in his conversation."



AS soon as a man is open to reason the argument is closed.



MANY a couple just suited to each other spoil it all by getting married.

BRAGGARTS

By William R. Benét

THIS morning by my garden wall,
This morning as I came,
The gipsy-clad nasturtiums all
Lit up my heart like flame!

Their ragged, brilliant little bells
Were gay with sunset fires
And oh, the tale their leader tells,
Who knows their soul desires!

"Oh, we have marched by sunset seas
And danced through eerie noons;
Through lilac twilights, dense with bees,
Have fleered our mad platoons!

"Gemmed with bright rains, when gutters ran
Dun floods the byways through,
The village folk have gaped to scan
The passing of our crew!

"By olden ports, by downs and dunes,
By fabled lost countrees,
Our rollick feet have danced to tunes
That none know but the bees!

"Swart are our hearts with elfin fire,
And strange the urge we know;
And now we flicker with desire
To flit, to march, to go!"

And yet this evening, when I scanned
For that which might befall,
Drowsed stood my bright nasturtiums, and
All dreaming by the wall!



YOU can lead a woman to the mirror, but you can't make her see herself as others see her.

THE CONSTANT LOVER*

By St. John Hankin

CHARACTERS

EVELYN RIVERS

CECIL HARBURTON

SCENE—*A glade in a wood. About the center is a great beech tree, the branches of which overhang the stage with brilliant sunlight filtering through. The sky where it can be seen through the branches is a cloudless blue. There is a chattering of innumerable small birds while the curtain is still down, which grows louder as it rises. CECIL HARBURTON is discovered sitting on the ground under the tree, leaning his back against its trunk and reading a book. He wears a straw hat and the lightest of gray flannel suits. Presently a wood pigeon coos in the distance. Then a thrush begins to sing in the tree overhead and is answered by another. CECIL looks up.*

CECIL

By Jove, that's jolly! (*He listens for a moment and returns to his book. Suddenly a cuckoo begins to call insistently and he looks up again.*) Cuckoo too! Bravo! (*Again he returns to his book. Enter EVELYN RIVERS. She also is clad for summer and on her head is a large straw hat. As she approaches the tree a twig snaps under her foot and CECIL looks up. He jumps to his feet, closing his book, and advances to her eagerly.*) Here you are at last!

EVELYN

At last?

CECIL

Yes. You're awfully late! (*Looks at his watch.*)

EVELYN

Am I?

CECIL

You know you are. I expected you at three.

EVELYN

Why? I never said I'd come at three. Indeed, I never said I'd come at all.

CECIL

No. But it's always been three.

EVELYN

Has it?

CECIL

And now it's half past. I consider I've been cheated out of a whole half-hour.

EVELYN

I couldn't help it. Mother kept me. She wanted the roses done in the drawing-room.

CECIL

How stupid of Mrs. Rivers!

EVELYN

Mr. Harburton!

CECIL

What's the matter?

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EVELYN

I don't think you *ought* to call my mother stupid.

CECIL

Why not—if she is stupid? Most parents are stupid, by the way. I've noticed it before. Mrs. Rivers ought to have thought of the roses earlier. The morning is the proper time to gather roses. Didn't you tell her that?

EVELYN

I'm afraid I couldn't very well. You see it was really *I* who ought to have thought of the roses! I always do them. But this morning I forgot.

CECIL

I see. Well, sit down now you *are* here. Isn't it a glorious day?

EVELYN (*hesitating*)

I don't believe I *ought* to sit down.

CECIL

Why not? There's no particular virtue about standing, is there? I hate standing. So let's sit down and be comfortable. (*They seat themselves.*)

EVELYN

But *ought* I to be sitting here with you? That's what I mean. It's—not as if I really *knew* you, is it?

CECIL

Not *know* me? (*The chatter of birds dies away.*)

EVELYN

Not properly—we've never even been introduced. We just met quite by chance here in the wood.

CECIL

Yes. (*Ecstatically.*) What a glorious chance!

EVELYN

Still, I'm sure mother wouldn't approve.

CECIL

And you say Mrs. Rivers isn't stupid!

EVELYN (*laughing*)

I expect most people would agree with her. Most people would say you oughtn't to have spoken to a girl you didn't know like that.

CECIL

Oh, come, I only asked my way back to the inn.

EVELYN

There was no harm in asking your way, of course. But then we began talking of other things. And then we sat down under this tree. And we've sat talking under this tree every afternoon since. And that was a week ago.

CECIL

Well, it's such an awfully jolly tree.

EVELYN

I don't know *what* mother would say if she heard of it!

CECIL

Would it be something unpleasant?

EVELYN (*ruefully*)

I'm afraid it would.

CECIL

How fortunate you don't know it, then!

EVELYN (*pondering*)

Still, if I really *oughtn't* to be here. . . . Do you think I oughtn't to be here?

CECIL

I don't think I should go into that if I were you. Sensible people think of what they want to do, not of what they *ought* to do, otherwise they get confused. And then of course they do the wrong thing.

EVELYN

But if I do what I oughtn't, I generally find I'm sorry for it afterwards.

CECIL

Not half so sorry as you would have been if you hadn't done it. In this world the things one regrets are the things one hasn't done. For instance, if I hadn't spoken to you a week ago here in the wood I should have regretted it all my life.

EVELYN

Would you? (*He nods.*) Really and truly?

CECIL

Really and truly. (*He lays his hand on hers for a moment and she lets it rest there. The cuckoo calls loudly once or twice and she draws her hand away.*)

EVELYN

There's the cuckoo.

CECIL

Yes. Isn't he jolly? Don't you love cuckoos?

EVELYN

They *are* rather nice.

CECIL

Aren't they! And such clever beggars. Most birds are fools—like most people. As soon as they're grown up they go and get married, and then the rest of their lives are spent in bringing up herds of children and wondering how on earth to pay their school bills. Your cuckoo sees the folly of all that. No school bills for *her*! No nursing the baby! She just flits from hedgerow to hedgerow flirting with other cuckoos, and when she lays an egg she lays it in someone else's nest, which saves all the trouble of housekeeping. Oh, a wise bird!

EVELYN (*pouting, looking away from him*)

I don't know that I *do* like cuckoos so much after all. They sound to me rather selfish.

CECIL

Yes. But so sensible! The duck's a wise bird too in her way. But *her* way's different from the cuckoo's. She always *treads on her eggs*.

EVELYN

Clumsy creature!

CECIL

Not a bit. She does it on purpose. You see, it's much less trouble than *sitting* on them. As soon as she's laid an egg she raises one foot absent-mindedly and gives a warning quack. Whereupon the farmer rushes up, takes it away, and puts it under some wretched hen, who has to do the sitting for her. I call that genius!

EVELYN

Genius?

CECIL

Yes. Genius is the infinite capacity for making other people take pains.

EVELYN

How can you say that?

CECIL

I didn't. Carlyle did.

EVELYN

I don't believe he said anything of the kind. And I don't believe ducks are clever one bit. They don't look clever.

CECIL

That's part of their cleverness. In this world if one *is* wise one should look like a fool. It puts people off their guard. That's what the duck does.

EVELYN

Well, I think ducks are horrid, and cuckoos too. And I believe most birds *like* bringing up their chickens and feeding them and looking after them.

CECIL

They do. That's the extraordinary part of it. They spend their whole lives building nests and laying eggs and hatching them. And when the chickens come out the father has to fuss round finding worms. And the nest's abominably overcrowded and the babies are perpetually squalling, and that drives the husband to the public house, and it's all as uncomfortable as the devil—

EVELYN

Mr. Harburton!

CECIL

Well, I shouldn't like it. In fact, I call it fatuous. (EVELYN *leans forward, pondering this philosophy with a slightly puckered brow.*) I say, you don't look a bit comfortable like that. Lean back against the tree. It's a first-rate tree. That's why I chose it.

EVELYN (*tries and fails*)

I can't. My hat gets in the way.

CECIL

Take it off then.

EVELYN

I think I will. That's better. (*Leans back luxuriously against the trunk and puts her hat down on bank beside her.*)

CECIL

Much better. (*Looks at her with frank admiration.*) By Jove, you *do* look jolly without your hat!

EVELYN

Do I?

CECIL

Yes. Your hair's such a jolly color. I noticed it the first time I saw you. You had your hat off then, you know. You were walking through the wood fanning yourself with it. And directly I caught sight of you the sun came out and simply flooded your hair with light. And there was the loveliest pink flush on your cheeks, and your eyes were soft and shining—

EVELYN (*troubled*)

Mr. Harburton, you mustn't say things to me like that.

CECIL

Mustn't I? Why not? Don't you like being told you look jolly?

EVELYN (*naïvely*)

I do *like* it, of course. But *ought* you . . .

CECIL (*groans*)

Oh, it's *that* again.

EVELYN

I mean, it's not *right* for men to say those things to girls.

CECIL

I don't see that—if they're true. You *are* pretty and your eyes *are* soft and your cheeks—why they're flushing at this moment! (*Triumphantly.*) Why shouldn't I say it?

EVELYN

Please! . . . (*She stops, and her eyes fill with tears.*)

CECIL (*much concerned*)

Miss Rivers, what's the matter? Why, I believe you're crying!

EVELYN (*sniffing suspiciously*)

I'm—not.

CECIL

You are, I can see the tears. Have I said anything to hurt you? What is it? Tell me.

EVELYN (*recovering herself by an effort*)

It's nothing. Nothing really. I'm all right now. Only you won't say things to me like that again, will you? Promise. (*Taking out handkerchief.*)

CECIL

I promise . . . if you really wish it. And now dry your eyes and let's be good children. That's what my nurse used to say when my sister and I quarreled. Shall I dry them for you? (*Takes her handkerchief and does so tenderly.*)

EVELYN (*with a little gulp*)

Thank you. (*Recovers her handkerchief.*) How absurd you are!

CECIL

Thank you!

EVELYN

Did you often quarrel with your sister?

CECIL

Perpetually. *And* my brothers. Didn't you?

EVELYN

I never had any.

CECIL

Poor little kid! You must have been rather lonely.

EVELYN

There was always Reggie.

CECIL

Reggie?

EVELYN

My cousin, Reggie Townsend. He lived with us when we were children. His parents were in India.

CECIL

So he used to quarrel with you instead.

EVELYN (*shocked*)

Oh, no! We *never* quarreled. At least, Reggie never did. *I* did sometimes.

CECIL

How dull! There's no good in quarreling if people won't quarrel back.

EVELYN

I don't think there's *any* good in quarreling at all.

CECIL

Oh, yes, there is. There's the making it up again.

EVELYN

Was that why you used to quarrel with your sister?

CECIL

I expect so, though I didn't know it, of course—then. I used to tease her awfully, I remember, and pull her hair. She had awfully jolly hair. Like yours—oh, I forgot, I mustn't say that. Used you to pull Reggie's hair?

EVELYN (*laughing*)

I'm afraid I did sometimes.

CECIL

I was sure of it. How long was he with you?

EVELYN

Till he went to Winchester. And of course he used to be with us in the holidays after that. And he comes to us now whenever he can get away for a few days. He's in his uncle's office in the city. He'll be a partner some day.

CECIL

Poor chap!

EVELYN

Poor chap! Mother says he's very fortunate.

CECIL

She would. Parents always think it very fortunate when young men have to go to an office every day. I know mine do.

EVELYN

Do you go to an office every day?

CECIL

No.

EVELYN (*with dignity*)

Then I don't think you can know much about it, can you?

CECIL (*carelessly*)

I know too much. That's why I don't go.

EVELYN

What do you do?

CECIL

I don't do anything. I'm at the Bar.

EVELYN

If you're at the Bar, why are you down here instead of up in London working?

CECIL

Because if I were in London I might possibly get a brief. It's not likely, but it's possible. And if I got a brief I should have to be mugging in chambers, or wrangling in a stuffy court, instead of sitting under a tree in the shade with you.

EVELYN

But *ought* you to waste your time like that?

CECIL (*genuinely shocked*)

Waste my time! To sit under a tree—a really nice tree like this—talking to you. You call that *wasting time!*

EVELYN

Isn't it?

CECIL

No! To sit in a frowsy office adding up figures when the sky's blue and the weather's heavenly, *that's* wasting time. The only real way in which one can waste time is not to enjoy it, to spend one's day blinking at a ledger and never notice how beautiful the world is, and how good it is to be alive. To be only making money when one might be making love, *that* is wasting time!

EVELYN

How earnestly you say that!

CECIL (*bending close*)

Isn't it true?

EVELYN (*troubled*)

Perhaps it is. (*She looks away from him.*)

CECIL

You know it is. Everyone knows it. Only people won't admit it. (*Leaning toward her and looking into her eyes.*) You know it at this moment.

EVELYN (*returning his gaze slowly*)
I think I do.

(*For a long moment they look into each other's eyes. Then he takes her two hands, draws her slowly toward him and kisses her gently on the lips.*)

CECIL

Ah! (*Sigh of satisfaction. He releases her hands and leans back against the tree again.*)

EVELYN (*sadly*)

Oh, Mr. Harburton, you *oughtn't* to have done that!

CECIL

Why not?

EVELYN

Because . . . (*Hesitates.*) Because you *oughtn't*. . . . Because men *oughtn't* to kiss girls.

CECIL (*scandalized*)

Oughtn't to kiss girls! What nonsense! What on earth were girls made for if not to be kissed?

EVELYN

I mean they *oughtn't*—unless—(*Looking away.*)

CECIL (*puzzled*)

Unless?

EVELYN (*looking down*)

Unless they *love* them.

CECIL (*relieved*)

But I *do* love you. Of course I love you. That's why I kissed you.

(*A thrush is heard calling in the distance.*)

EVELYN

Really? (*He nods and she sighs contentedly.*) That makes it all right then.

CECIL

I should think it did. And as it's all right I may kiss you again, mayn't I?

EVELYN (*shyly*)

If you like.

CECIL

"You darling! (*Takes her in his arms and kisses her long and tenderly.*) Lean your head on my shoulder; you'll find it awfully comfortable. There! Is that all right?

EVELYN

Quite.

CECIL

How pretty your hair is! I always thought your hair lovely. And it's as soft as silk. I always knew it would be like silk. (*Strokes it.*) Do you like me to stroke your hair?

EVELYN

Yes!

CECIL

Sensible girl! (*Pause; he laughs happily.*) I say, what am I to call you?

Do you know, I don't even know your Christian name yet?

EVELYN

Don't you?

CECIL

No. You've never told me. What is it? Mine's Cecil.

EVELYN

Mine's Evelyn.

CECIL

Evelyn? Oh, I don't like Evelyn. It's rather a *stodgy* sort of name. I think I shall call you Eve. Does any one else call you Eve?

EVELYN

No.

CECIL

Then I shall certainly call you Eve. After the first woman man ever loved. May I?

EVELYN

If you like—Cecil.

CECIL

That's settled then. (*He kisses her again. Pause of utter happiness, during which he settles her head more comfortably on his shoulder, and puts an arm round her.*) Isn't it heavenly to be in love?

EVELYN

Heavenly!

CECIL

There's nothing like it in the whole world. Love is the most beautiful thing in the whole world! Say so.

EVELYN

Love is the most beautiful thing in the whole world.

CECIL

Good girl! There's a reward for saying it right. (*Kisses her.*)

EVELYN (*meditatively*)

I'm afraid Reggie won't be pleased. (*The chatter of sparrows is heard.*)

CECIL (*indifferently*)

Won't he?

EVELYN (*shakes her head*)

No. You see, Reggie's in love with me too. He always has been in love with me, for years and years. (*Sighs.*) Poor Reggie!

CECIL

On the contrary. Happy Reggie!

EVELYN (*astonished*)

What *do* you mean?

CECIL

To have been in love with you years and years. *I've* only been in love with you a week. I've only known you a week.

EVELYN

I'm afraid Reggie didn't look at it like that.

CECIL (*nods*)

No brains.

EVELYN

You see, I always refused *him*.

CECIL

Exactly. And he always went on loving you. What more could the silly fellow want?

EVELYN (*shyly, looking up at him*)

He *wanted* me to accept him, I suppose.

(*The bird chatter dies away.*)

CECIL

Ah! Reggie ought to read Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn." I say, what jolly eyes you've got! I noticed them the moment we met here in the wood. That was why I spoke to you.

EVELYN (*demurely*)

I thought it was to ask your way back to the inn.

CECIL

That was an excuse. I knew the way as well as you did. I'd only just come from there. But when I saw you with the sunshine on your pretty soft hair and lighting up your pretty soft eyes, I said I *must* speak to her. And I did. Are you glad I spoke to you?

EVELYN

Yes.

CECIL

Glad and glad?

EVELYN

Yes.

CECIL

Good girl! (*Leans over and kisses her cheek.*)

EVELYN (*sitting up*)

And now we must go and tell mother.

CECIL (*with a comic groan*)

Need we?

EVELYN (*brightly*)

Of course.

CECIL (*sighing*)

Well, if *you* think so.

EVELYN (*laughing*)

You don't seem to look forward to it much.

CECIL

I don't. That's the part I always hate.

EVELYN

Always? (*Starts forward and looks at him, puzzled.*)

CECIL (*quite unconscious*)

Yes. The going to the parents and all that. Parents really are the most preposterous people. They've no feeling for *romance* whatever. You meet a girl in a wood. It's May. The sun's shining. There's not a cloud in the sky. She's adorably pretty. You fall in love. Everything heavenly! Then—why, I can't imagine—she wants you to tell her mother. Well, you do tell her mother. And her mother at once begins to ask you what your profession is, and how much money you earn, and how much money you have that you don't earn—and that spoils it all.

EVELYN (*bewildered*)

But I don't understand. You talk as if you had actually done all this before.

CECIL

So I have. Lots of times.

EVELYN

Oh! (*Jumps up from the ground and faces him, her eyes flashing with rage.*)

CECIL

I say, don't get up. It's not time to go yet. It's only four. Sit down again.

EVELYN (*struggling for words*)

Do you mean to say you've been in love with girls before? *Other* girls?

CECIL (*apparently genuinely astonished at the question*)

Of course I have.

EVELYN

And been engaged to them?

CECIL

Not engaged. I've never been engaged so far. But I've been in love over and over again. (EVELYN *stamps her foot with rage—turning away from him.*) My dear girl, what is the matter? You look quite cross. (*Rises.*)

EVELYN (*furious*)

And you're not even *ashamed* of it?

CECIL (*roused to sit up by this question*)

Ashamed of it? Ashamed of being in love? How can you say such a thing! Of course I'm not ashamed. What's the good of being alive at all if one isn't to be in love? I'm perpetually in love. In fact, I'm hardly ever out of love—with somebody.

EVELYN (*still furious*)

Then if you're in love, why don't you get engaged? A man has no business to make love to a girl and not be engaged to her. It's not right.

CECIL (*reasoning with her*)

That's the parents' fault. I told you parents were preposterous people. They won't allow me to get engaged.

EVELYN

Why not?

CECIL

Oh, for different reasons. They say I'm not *serious* enough. Or that I don't work enough. Or that I haven't got enough money. Or else they simply say they don't think I'm fitted to make their daughter happy. Anyhow, they won't sanction an engagement. They all agree about *that*. Your mother would be just the same. (*Impatient exclamation from EVELYN.*) I don't blame her. I don't say she's not right. I don't say they haven't all been right. In fact, I believe they *have* been right. I'm only explaining how it is.

EVELYN (*savagely*)

I see how it is. You don't really want to be married.

CECIL

Of course I don't *want* to be married. Nobody does unless he's perfectly idiotic. One wants to be in love. Being in love's splendid. And I dare say being engaged isn't bad—though I've had no experience of that so far. But being married must be simply hateful.

EVELYN (*boiling with rage*)

Nonsense! How can it be hateful to be married if it's splendid to be in love?

(*The cuckoo is heard.*)

CECIL

Have you forgotten the cuckoo?

EVELYN

Oh!

CECIL

No ties, no responsibilities, no ghastly little villa with children bellowing in the nursery. Just life in the open hedge-row. Life and love. Happy cuckoo!

EVELYN (*furious*)

I think cuckoos detestable. They're mean, horrid, *disgusting* birds.

CECIL

No, no. I can't have you abusing cuckoos. They're particular friends of mine. In fact, I'm a sort of cuckoo myself.

EVELYN (*turning on him*)

Oh, I hate you! I hate you! (*Stamps her foot.*)

CECIL (*with quiet conviction*)

You don't.

EVELYN

I do!

CECIL (*shaking his head*)

You don't. (*Quite gravely.*) One never really hates the people one has once loved.

(*He looks into her eyes. For a moment or two she returns his gaze fiercely. Then her eyes fall and they fill with tears.*)

EVELYN (*half crying*)

How horrid you are to say *that*!

CECIL

Why?

EVELYN

Because it's true, I suppose. Oh, I'm so unhappy! (*Begins to cry.*)

CECIL (*genuinely distressed*)

Eve! You're crying. You mustn't do that. I can't bear seeing people cry. (*Lays hand on her shoulder.*)

EVELYN (*shaking it off*)

Don't! I can't bear you to touch me. After falling in love with one girl after another like that. When I thought you were only in love with me.

CECIL

So I am only in love with you—now.

EVELYN (*tearfully*)

But I thought you'd never been in love with anyone else. And I let you call me Eve because you said she was the first woman man ever loved.

CECIL

But I never said she was the only one, did I? (*Argumentatively.*) And one can't *help* being in love with people when one *is* in love, can one? I couldn't *help* falling in love with you, for instance, the moment I saw you. You looked simply splendid. It was such a splendid day, too. *Of course* I fell in love with you.

EVELYN (*slightly appeased by his compliment, drying her eyes*)

But you seem to fall in love with such a lot of people.

CECIL

I do. (*Mischievously.*) But ought *you* to throw stones at me? After all, being in love with more than one person is no worse than having more than one person in love with you. How about Reggie?

EVELYN

Reggie?
(*The sparrows' chatter starts again.*)

CECIL (*nods*)

Reggie's in love with you, isn't he? So am I. And both at once, too! I'm only in love with one person at a time.

EVELYN (*rebelliously*)

I can't help Reggie being in love with me.

CECIL

And I can't help *my* being in love with you. That's just my point. I knew you'd see it.

EVELYN

I don't see it at all. Reggie is quite different from you. Reggie's love is true and constant.

CECIL

Well, I'm a *constant* lover if you come to that.

EVELYN

You aren't. You know you aren't.

CECIL

Yes, I am. A constant lover is a lover who is constantly in love.

EVELYN

Only with the same person.

CECIL

It doesn't say so. It only says constant.

EVELYN (*half-laughing*)

How ridiculous you are! (*Turns away.*)

CECIL (*sigh of relief*)

That's right. Now you're good-tempered again.

EVELYN

I'm not.

CECIL

What a story!

EVELYN

I'm not. I'm very, *very* angry.

CECIL

That's impossible. You can't possibly be angry and laugh at the same time, can you? No one can. And you *did* laugh. You're doing it now. So don't let's quarrel any more. It's absurd to quarrel on such a fine day, isn't it? Let's make it up, and be lovers again.

(*The sparrows' chatter dies away.*)

EVELYN (*shaking her head*)

No.

CECIL

Please!

EVELYN (*shaking her head*)

No.

CECIL

Well, you're very foolish. Love isn't a thing to throw away. It's too precious for that. Love is the most beautiful

thing in the whole world. You said so yourself not ten minutes ago.

EVELYN

I didn't. You said it. (*Looking down.*)

CECIL

But you said it after me. (*Gently and gravely.*) Eve, dear, don't be silly. Let's be in love while we can. Youth is the time to be in love, isn't it? Soon you and I will be dull and stupid and middle-aged like all the other tedious people. And then it will be too late. Youth passes so quickly. Don't let's waste a second of it. They say the May-fly only lives for one day. He is born in the morning. All the afternoon he flutters over the river in the sunshine, dodging the trout and flirting with other May-flies. And at evening he dies. Think of the poor May-fly who happens to be born on a wet day! The tragedy of it!

EVELYN (*softly*)

Poor May-fly.

CECIL

There! You're sorry for the May-fly, you see. You're only angry with me.

EVELYN

Because you're not a May-fly.

CECIL

Yes, I am. A sort of May-fly.

EVELYN (*with suspicion of tears in her voice*)

You aren't. How can you be? Besides, you said you were a cuckoo just now.

CECIL

I suppose I'm a cuckoo-May-fly. For I hate wet days. And if you're going to cry again, it might just as well be wet, mightn't it? So do dry your eyes like a good girl. Let me do it for you. (*He does it with her handkerchief and she laughs ruefully.*) There, that's better. And now we're going to be good children again, aren't we?

EVELYN (*giving in*)

Yes.

CECIL (*holding out hand*)

And you'll kiss and be friends?

EVELYN

I'll be friends, of course. (*Sadly.*) But you must never kiss me again.

CECIL

What a shame! Why not?

EVELYN

Because you mustn't.

CECIL (*cheerfully*)

Well, you'll sit down again anyhow, won't you? Just to show we've made it up. (*He moves toward tree.*)

EVELYN (*shakes head*)

No.

CECIL (*disappointed; turns*)

Ah! Then you haven't really made it up.

EVELYN

Yes, I have. (*Picks up her hat.*) But I must go now. Reggie's coming down by the five o'clock train, and I want to be at the station to meet him. (*Holds out hand.*) Good-bye, Mr. Harburton.

CECIL (*taking hand*)

Eve! You're going to accept Reggie! (*Pause.*)

EVELYN (*half to herself*)

I wonder.

CECIL

And he'll have to tell your mother?

EVELYN

Of course.

CECIL (*drops her hand*)

Poor Reggie! So his romance ends too!

EVELYN

It won't. If I marry Reggie I shall make him very happy.

CECIL

Very likely. Marriage may be happiness, but I'm hanged if it's romance!

EVELYN

Oh! (*Exclamation of impatience.*)

(*CECIL watches her departure with a smile half-amused, half-pained, till she is long out of sight. Then with a half-sigh turns back to his tree.*)

CECIL (*re-seating himself*)

Poor Reggie! (*Re-opens his book and settles himself to read again. A cuckoo hoots loudly from a distant thicket and is answered by another. CECIL looks up from his book to listen as the curtain falls.*)

LE BEAU MONDE DE FRANCE

Par André de Fouquières

Author, lecturer, traveler and *homme du monde*, M. André de Fouquières, perhaps better than anyone else in Paris, is qualified to speak of and for the Society of the French capital, where he is a recognized leader of the most fashionable set. His forthcoming visit to the United States makes the following article written specially for *THE SMART SET* particularly timely. In it, beside discussing generally French society, he describes two remarkable entertainments in which he took a prominent part and which in point of splendor as well as artistic beauty eclipsed any private entertainments that have been given in Paris since the establishment of the Third Republic. We have decided to publish this in lieu of the usual French story.

PARIS, pensez-vous, est un vaste music hall. C'est peut-être la définition de la vie de Paris pour quelques jeunes fêtards et un grand nombre d'étrangers de passage.

Je vous répondrai que le music hall n'est pour nous qu'un passe-temps, un accessoire, un à-côté sans importance; cela ne saurait en rien dépeindre la vie du monde, la vie du vrai monde à Paris.

L'étranger n'aura qu'une fausse idée de Paris s'il ne va que dans les music halls ou les halls des grands hôtels. Là, vous y rencontrerez surtout une société cosmopolite, des gens qui, s'ennuyant chez eux, viennent ici se gorger de plaisirs et toujours en quête d'aventures.

Rendez vous un soir de la "season" dans un restaurant fameux, vous n'y verrez que de rares Français. Ils sont minorité. Où sont-ils? chez eux, dans leurs hôtels. La mode de recevoir dans des palaces en location a passé, Dieu merci! n'est-il pas plus élégant et de meilleur ton de recevoir chez soi quand on a sa maison.

Nous avons de délicieuses installations où tout nous parle du passé: tableaux, tapisseries, objets d'Art.

Dans ces cadres, les Français doivent recevoir leurs amis et les étrangers de distinction qui leur sont particulièrement présentés.

Nous n'avons que faire des étrangers qui viennent là se créer des relations,

quand vous ne voulez pas les admettre dans votre propre maison.

La forme du gouvernement influe beaucoup sur les mœurs mondaines. Autrefois, quand nous avions une Cour, nous avions de ce fait un centre qui donnait le ton, la mode.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes en république, hélas! et nous n'avons plus ce moyen de centralisation.

Le ton désormais est donné par quelques maisons élégantes.

Quelles sont les causes du brevet d'élégance donné à certaines maisons? C'est une situation sociale que donne une grande naissance, soit une grande fortune honorablement acquise, soit une illustration dans le domaine des lettres, des arts ou des sciences!

Les maisons françaises les plus recherchées sont celles où l'on reçoit le corps diplomatique et les gens de lettres de qualité supérieure.

Les gens de lettres sont généralement reçus sans leurs femmes qui souvent appartiennent à des milieux sociaux inférieurs. Certaines d'entre eux ont en effet épousé de très petites bourgeoises ou même leurs maîtresses, en un temps où ils ne connaissaient pas encore la gloire, mais où ils ne savaient que les difficultés de la vie.

L'intimité avec les gens de lettres est une image du passé, de l'époque où la Marquise de Rambouillet recevait chez

elle les hommes de talent; elle tenait, dit-on, bureau d'esprit.

Pour ma part, le salon qui me semble être le type est celui où se trouvent réunies toutes les élites, tout ce qui représente les forces d'un pays.

Rien n'est plus agréable qu'une maison où nous prenons contact avec des personnalités distinguées des colonies étrangères et du monde diplomatique. Les diplomates ont en effet parcouru le monde; n'est-ce pas la façon d'apprendre le plus de choses avec le plus d'agrément.

Heureusement, à Paris nous nous refusons généralement à recevoir des gens qui n'ont d'autre distinction que celle d'être riches. L'argent est puissant mais il n'est pas encore maître, Dieu merci! Le droit de la naissance et le droit de l'intelligence ont droit de priorité.

Je repousse avec violence toute société cosmopolite (dans le mauvais sens du mot), celle dont nous ignorons les origines et qui veut s'imposer à nous par sa seule richesse.

Une maison classée élégante peut parfois imposer une femme qui n'apporte avec elle que sa beauté ou sa richesse mais c'est chose assez rare. Et la plupart du temps elle n'enfoncé les partis que parce qu'elle vient en aide avec ses deniers à une œuvre de charité.

Nous ne sommes pas en ce point aussi avancé que l'Angleterre. Souvent nous assistons à Londres à l'arrivée d'une inconnue de New-York qui réussit à s'infiltrer dans l'intimité de quelque grande dame anglaise et qui parvient ainsi à faire bonne figure dans le "smart set."

Cet exemple est rare chez nous. La république nous fait aimer davantage tout ce qui est tradition; c'est pourquoi une femme française divorcée n'aura pas une situation considérée; elle pourra encore moins se remarier, divorcée, si elle désire être reçue et invitée.

Nous sommes entièrement heureux de recevoir dans nos salons les étrangers de qualité, je veux dire ceux qui ont une situation sociale dans leur pays.

Il suffit qu'ils choisissent avec atten-

tion à Paris ceux qui les présenteront à la société.

Nous ne pouvons hélas! leur offrir tout ce que notre cœur nous conseille, car le nombre des étrangers est toujours croissant dans notre capitale.

J'engage enfin les étrangers à ne pas se faire une idée de la vie mondaine de Paris d'après la vie extérieure qu'ils trouvent.

Nos meilleures familles ne connaissent pas les halls des grands hotels et l'atmosphère des music halls.

Je connais pour ma part certaines maisons qui ne se manifestent pas en public, dont on parle peu, et qui sont le centre d'illustrations dans tous les genres.

Combien de salons existent encore où le dîner se passe à deviser avec esprit, où l'on se préoccupe des événements du jour soit sociaux, soit politiques; ils ont conservé en quelque sorte l'empreinte du 18^e siècle. Je sais hélas! que ces "bureaux d'esprit" ont une tendance à disparaître au contact des idées modernes.

Mais j'ai encore foi dans le goût, le raffinement de notre vraie société parisienne quand je vois les prodiges de beauté qui ont été accomplis au cours des deux soirées costumées dont je vais vous entretenir longuement.

Jamais les bals costumés ne furent plus à la mode; cela nous fait songer aux divertissements de la Cour où le Roi Louis XIV apparaissait à ses invités dans un travesti d'un luxe inouï; cela nous fait songer à la délicieuse Reine Marie-Antoinette qui aimait à se costumer en simple bergère!

Le fameux bal des "*Mille et une Nuits*" dont on parlait depuis trois mois dans la société parisienne a été donné par le Comte et la Comtesse de Chabrillan. La réalisation a dépassé les espérances les plus optimistes. Les bals offerts par la Princesse de Sagan, jadis, à une époque où l'électricité n'existait pas encore, ont été de beaucoup dépassés par l'éclat de cette fête destinée à marquer comme l'une des plus éblouissantes, des plus étourdissantes de faste et d'élégance qui aient été vues.

Le thème de la fête y prêtait d'ail-

leurs admirablement, les Mille et une Nuits avec leur asiatique féerie, la liberté qu'elles laissent à l'imagination et à l'interprétation, ouvrant le champ le plus vaste au cadre et au détail d'une représentation de ce genre; car ce fut une représentation comportant plus de deux cents figurants qu'avaient tous un rôle et le jouèrent . . . comme il arrive rarement au théâtre, sans une faute de goût, ni défaillance de mémoire.

Ces figurants appartenaient aux plus anciennes familles de France.

La cour de l'hôtel de Mme. de Chabrillan avait été transformée en une vaste tente persane, à fond d'or, traversée de pratiques lumineux du même style, imitant la mosaïque d'or et qui repandèrent parmi les innombrables lanternes de cuivre découpé une lueur délicate et somptueuse, par instants traversée de rayons lunaires ou ensoleillée d'un invisible projecteur. Des glycines en fleurs drapaient de leurs irréelles astragales le pourtour de velum couleur de nuit.

Un trône avait été agencé parmi les draperies étincelantes et les peaux de tigre pour Schéhérazade, la Reine de la fête qui n'était autre que la maîtresse de maison, à laquelle onze entrées, plus éblouissantes les unes que les autres, vinrent successivement rendre hommage, apportant les présents, les parfums et les fleurs, précédées de musiques orientales, de danseurs, de bayadères, de princes et de princesses, dont le défilé dura de onze heures du soir à deux heures du matin.

Un peu avant que Schéhérazade parut, on remarquait sur les gradins réservés aux invités tout ce qui porte un nom dans le corps diplomatique et l'aristocratie.

Lorsque Schéhérazade (la Comtesse de Chabrillan) paraît sur le seuil de la vaste tente prolongé à l'infini par le jeu des glaces dissimulées dans toutes les ouvertures des draperies, les applaudissements éclatent et une marche soulignée par les accords de trompe et de cuivre retentit. Une tiare scintille sur la chevelure noire, et les diamants dont le costume est recouvert brillent jusque sur le grand manteau vert brodé de fleurs lilas, que des enfants portent

avec peine. Puis un officier persan noir et or porte le livre de Schéhérazade. La reine de la fête gagne le divan couvert de peaux de tigre et gardé par deux anciens lions de bronze précieux. Les esclaves effeuillent des roses et le défilé des entrées commence. J'ai la délicate mission d'annoncer d'une voix retentissante le titre de chaque nuit figurée sur le programme.

La première entrée est celle de l'Histoire charmante des animaux favoris du Sultan Baibars.

Puis c'est le *sixième voyage de Simbad qui rapporte à Bagdad la suprême divinité de l'île de Serindah*.

Sur un char doré, décoré de fleurs, apparaissent trois déesses hindoues aux tiaras d'or, hiératiques sous le feu des projections dans leurs tuniques rigides. Accourt bientôt la danseuse voilée, dont les mains agitaient les sonnettes et qui courait au-devant du char trainé par les compagnons de Simbad vêtu de blanc et de vert.

Il faut dire avec quelle grâce, quelle simplicité charmante les jeunes filles de la société qui ont dansé à cette fête se sont acquittées de leur tâche, et combien leur inexpérience même pouvait ajouter de finesse au plus incomparable tableau qu'une fête de la société parisiennes ait jamais offert.

La troisième entrée était le *conte de la Princesse Suleïka* représentée par la Comtesse G. de Lévis-Mirepoix placée au sommet du char, entre quatre colonnes dorées, et qui avait à ses pieds, sur les quatre faces d'une plate-forme tournante, les heures, le crépuscule et l'aurore, la nuit et le jour figurées par des femmes d'une délicate beauté.

Ce furent ensuite de sensationnelles apparitions que celle du *Roi des Iles noires* et de la *Princesse Boudour*, que celle de l'*Histoire de Gerbe de Perles aux Yeux babyloniens*.

L'*Histoire Magique du Cheval d'ébène* porté dans sa litière d'or et dont les yeux lancent des flammes, suivit. Elle était organisée par la Duchesse de Guiche.

L'entrée suivante était l'*Histoire de la Jouvencelle, chef-d'œuvre des cœurs, lieutenant des oiseaux*, que la Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre et la Marquise de

Noailles avaient réglée, et qui offrit tout d'abord l'apparition d'Haroun-al-Raschid, émir des fidèles, envahi par une invincible tristesse dans son palais de Bagdad, et qui envoie son poète favori dans les pays lointains pour lui rapporter des bords du Yémen les femmes oiseaux.

La vision de Madame Letellier en sultane, vêtue de mousseline de soie rose et dont le turban était surmonté d'une grande plume blanche, souleva des applaudissements qui redoublèrent lorsqu'apparurent des femmes d'une radieuse beauté enfermées dans des cages d'or, comme des oiseaux du Paradis.

Le conte qui vint ensuite: *Histoire de la Sultane de Bagdad et du Prince des Iles jaunes*; c'est alors qu'apparut la Comtesse de Lubersac qui dansa délicieusement, dans un costume de drap d'or à courte jupe sur de longs voiles frangés d'or, dissimulée par les écharpes que ses suivantes tenaient autour d'elle et qui en se soulevant formaient un dais au-dessus de sa tête.

Les deux dernières entrées qui suivirent ne furent pas moins acclamées.

Nous assistions quelques jours après à la Mille et troisième nuit! Nous allions de féerie en féerie, et je me sentais heureux et fier de collaborer avec mes amis à ces réjouissances d'un art supérieur.

La seconde fête fut donnée par la Comtesse Blanche de Clermont-Tonnerre et à propos de cette fête, une personnalité féminine de la société parisienne (la Comtesse Edmond de Pourtalès) qui a assisté à toutes les grandes fêtes données sous l'Empire et depuis lors, disait en sortant de la fête persane donnée par la Comtesse de Clermont-Tonnerre dans son somptueux hôtel de la rue François I^{er}, que jamais elle n'avait rien vu de comparable ni aux Tuileries ni à l'étranger, ni ailleurs.

On ne pouvait imaginer rien de plus pittoresque et de plus magnifique. C'était tout l'Orient, tout le rêve des Mille et une Nuits, tout le caractère de l'ancienne Perse traduits avec un luxe incomparable.

Aucune Cour d'Europe ne saurait offrir un tel spectacle.

Aux pieds des gradins réservés aux spectateurs, des fauteuils étaient occupés par les princes et les princesses devant qui les entrées viennent aussi s'incliner avec les révérences orientales, les mains tendues en avant. Il nous faut citer: S. A. I. la Grande Duchesse Vladimir de Russie, S. A. R. l'Infante Eulalie d'Espagne et son fils, l'Infant Luis; le P^{ce} et la P^{cesse} Louis d'Orléans et Bragance, princes impériaux du Brésil; S. A. I. le Grand Duc Boris de Russie; S. A. I. P^{ce} Ismail de Perse; S. A. Aga Khan, Prince Indien; S. A. le Maharajah de Kapurthala chez lequel je fus reçu royalement aux Indes il y a deux ans et au sujet duquel j'ai écrit un livre, "*Au Paradis des Rajahs*." Citons encore: S. A. le Prince Firouze; l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre; l'ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie et la Comtesse Szecsén; l'ambassadeur de Russie et Madame Tsvolsky; l'ambassadeur d'Espagne et Madame Perez-Caballéro; l'ambassadeur de Turquie et Madame Rifaat Pacha; le ministre de Perse. Impossible hélas! de citer tous les noms, huit cents personnes toutes costumées à l'orientale!

Ce soir-là aussi, en page persan je réclamais le silence avec un coup de gong, et j'annonçais successivement le thème de chaque entrée.

Dans cette longue succession d'entrées et de figures, d'évolutions et de danses, il n'y eut ni un retard ni une hésitation!

L'année 1912 restera marquée dans les fastes du monde par le souvenir de ces deux soirées de rêves telles que l'Orient n'a rien imaginé de plus beau!

Et je caresse un rêve qui sera probablement réalisé cet hiver! Un imprésario fameux me propose de venir faire l'hiver prochain des conférences aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique.

Cette pensée me réjouit le cœur car depuis longtemps j'ai le désir de visiter une des grandes nations du monde.

Si ce projet se réalise, je ferai une conférence sur les soirées orientales que je viens de décrire en m'aidant de projections lumineuses de couleur dont les procédés seront une révélation pour le monde scientifique!

SYNGE AND OTHERS

By H. L. Mencken

THE curse of popularity lingers like a pall over Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski and John Millington Synge, ready to swoop down at any minute, like the Pharaonic chicken (*Neophron percnopterus*) of Holy Writ, and bear them off to the department stores and the quartered oak bookcases. A metaphor perhaps of lamentable heterogeneity, but none the less you gather the idea behind it, and, let me hope, perceive the danger.

It would never do for Conrad, for one, to reach and inflame the vulgar, for the reason that the vulgar would at once translate his True Romance into shoddy romance, just as they translated Ibsen's "A Doll's House" into a suffragist tract and "Huckleberry Finn" into bad Oliver Optic. Imagine "Lord Jim" illustrated by the Cruikshanks of the best sellers, with Jim stretching seven feet three inches into the blue, and wearing patent leather slippers in the midst of the Bornese jungle! Imagine "Heart of Darkness" done into a drama of fustian by some literary *demi-mondain*—and Kurtz carried upon the stage by four supers in burnt cork and black undershirts! Imagine the elocutionists of the Chautauquas—may the Fire be hot for them Beyond!—giving readings from "The Nigger of the Narcissus" and "Typhoon"! And yet such scandals impend, for the publishers, awaking from their lewd dreams of new Oppenheims and undiscovered McCutcheons, announce extensive second editions of various Conrad tales—and by the same token, Synge appears in an elegant library edition, suitable for the built-in bookcase beside the open fireplace of any *Ladies' Home Journal* bungalow in the land.

Four or five years ago, while Synge still lived, the people of his own country tore up their theater seats and threw them at him, and the people of America dismissed him suspiciously, as but one more of the recondite devils praised by James Huneker, that agent of the incomprehensible and immoral. Only in such savage places as Vienna, Munich and Copenhagen was he hailed as artist. But now, as I have said, he appears suddenly in all the panoply of "THE WORKS OF—" (*Lucy*)—four stately and highly respectable volumes, bound in buckram and with uncut leaves—and before long, perhaps, we shall hear that the Ancient Order of Hibernians has forgiven him, and that he has been elevated to the national valhalla, along with Charles Lever and Mr. Dooley. Wherefore, and as in duty bound, I pronounce a curse upon the publishers who thus make him so seductive to the newly intellectual, and at the same time offer them my congratulations for doing it so well. They have put into these four volumes not only "The Playboy of the Western World," "Riders to the Sea" and the other plays of Synge, but also his sketch books of Kerry, Wicklow and the Aran Islands, his scattered poems and some of his translations from the French and Italian, not to mention four fine portraits of him, all in photogravure. In the volume on the Aran Islands the drawings by Jack B. Yeats are reproduced, but Mr. Yeats's equally excellent illustrations for the Kerry and Wicklow sketches are omitted. Other defects are the absence of an adequate introduction, reciting the circumstances of Synge's strange life and showing his precise relation to the other Neo-Celts, and the lack

of a bibliography. But allowing for all this, it is a very satisfactory edition, done soberly and in good taste, and so it should get a welcome, despite its invitation to the Goths and Huns.

Synge made his flash so unexpectedly and so recently, and it was so blinding when it came, that it is difficult, this near to it, to achieve a sound estimate of it and him. Down to 1903 or thereabout he was an obscure intellectual waster, living idly in Paris on four dollars a week or doing hack work for second rate periodicals. No one save a few Irish editors and poets had ever heard of him, and only W. B. Yeats believed that there was anything in him. Even the production of "In the Shadow of the Glen" and "Riders to the Sea" in Dublin (at the end of 1903 and the beginning of 1904, respectively) brought him the notice of only a few specialists in the drama. But when these one-acters were published in a modest shilling pamphlet, in 1905, whispers about him began to go abroad, and when "The Playboy" followed two years later, to the tune of Celtic yelps and cat calls, Synge began to come into his own. That was rather less than six years ago. Today this fantastic and eerie fellow, whose whole published work fills less space than "Vanity Fair" and little more than "Peer Gynt," is accepted as a genuine genius by all the critics of Christendom, and more than one of them, forgetting Sheridan and Goldsmith and disdaining all lesser men, has called him the greatest dramatist working in English since the age of Elizabeth. Staggering praise, and, to me at least, praise considerably overladen, but nevertheless its very exuberance shows that it has some basis in fact. Synge, in truth, was an artist of extraordinary talents, a dramatist who apparently accomplished with ease what others failed to accomplish by the severest painstaking, a sharp and relentless observer of human character, a contributor of new music to the English tongue—and if he had lived ten years longer, there is no doubt whatever that he would have justified the enthusiasm of some of his least compromising admirers, and taken his secure place beside Marlowe,

Scott, Congreve, Coleridge and the other sublime second-raters, who are no less venerable because they are not of the true blood royal.

I have spoken of Synge's apparent ease of manner, but I do not mean thereby that he struck the perfect note by intuition and without effort. As a matter of fact, he was an extremely conscious and conscientious craftsman, and if we had his notebooks we should probably find, as we have from Ibsen's, that much careful toil intervened between his first grappling with an idea and its ultimate incomparable expression. In "Deirdre of the Sorrows," indeed, there is proof of this, for Synge died before the play got its final touches, and so its dialogue, instead of showing an advance upon that of "Riders to the Sea," shows an actual retrogression. It lacks the perfect music; one trips, now and then, upon a harsh progression, an awkward cadence. But where Synge exceeded all other dramatists of his time was in his capacity for attaining to that perfect music when he bent his whole endeavor to the task. He was not the inventor of his medium, by any means. You will find the same haunting Irish-English, with its queer enallages and hyperbata, its daring use of ancillary clauses, its homely vocabulary, its richness in idiom, in the plays and fairy tales of Lady Augusta Gregory—and particularly in her Kilkartan Molière—and in the plays, too, of a number of other Neo-Celts, including Lennox Robinson and Seumas O'Kelly. But it was Synge, and Synge alone, who lifted it to consummate beauty, who penetrated to its farthest possibilities, who made it sing like the angels. No man, in truth, ever brought to the writing of English a more sensitive ear, a more certain feeling for color and rhythm. Read "Riders to the Sea" or "The Well of the Saints" or one of the translations from Villon, and you will go drunk with the sheer music of the words, as you go drunk over the Queen Mab speech in "Romeo and Juliet," or Faustus's apostrophe to Helen, or the One Hundred and Third Psalm. Here any merely intellectual analysis must needs fail. The appeal is not to the intelligence at all,

but to the midriff and the pulses. One feels such stuff more than one ever understands it.

But Synge, it should be said, is not all manner; there is matter in him, too. Translate it into ordinary English and "The Playboy" would still be a well built and effective comedy, with real Irishmen in it and irresistible humor. "Riders to the Sea," structurally, is an almost perfect piece of craftsmanship. Even "Deirdre," the least of the plays, is immeasurably better made than Lady Gregory's "Grania," or, to come still nearer home, the "Deirdre" of Mr. Yeats. As P. P. Howe points out, in "J. M. SYNGE: A CRITICAL STUDY" (*Kennerley*), the dramatist's acute sense of form, his instinct for balance, proportion, rhythm, is visible in the way his plots are managed as well as in the way his dialogue bumbles and flows. But here it is easy to overestimate him, and Mr. Howe succumbs to the temptation. As dramatic contrivances and even as studies of character his plays have been more than matched by the inventions of other dramatists. Nothing that Synge ever wrote, not "The Playboy" nor "Riders to the Sea," shows the superb design of Galsworthy's "Strife," Strindberg's "The Father" and Ibsen's "Ghosts," and in the delineation of Irish peasant types, for all his wanderings over the countryside, he has nothing to teach to Lady Gregory. It is only as stylist that he leaves all rivals behind him, but here his lead is so great that he really has no rivals at all. He got into words the surge and splendor, the ground bass and overtones, of mighty music. He made prose that had more of Aurora's light in it than nine-tenths of English poetry.

Now for Conrad, who comes forward, as if yielding in advance to his impending popularity, with a volume called "A PERSONAL RECORD" (*Harpers*), in which he describes the genesis of "Almayer's Folly," his first novel, and sweeps his incredible youth with a philosophical glance. The son of a Polish aristocrat, and bred to carry on the family trade of political martyrdom, he astounded his relatives toward the end of his school

days by demanding that they let him go to sea. Why to sea? Whence the origin of that exotic yearning? Poland was not a land of sailors. There was no record, in all the family archives, nor in those of friends and neighbors, of one who had dallied with ships. Nor was there even a history of a romantic invasion from without: no wandering mariner had penetrated that far country, to spin his yarns and set the boy afire. But nevertheless young Joseph declared for the sea, and after a due period of deliberation and opposition the family council surrendered and negotiations were opened with a mysterious M. Solary, of Marseilles, who knew ship captains and could berth an apprentice. A change of flags from the Tricolor to the Union Jack followed soon—"if a seaman, then an English seaman"—and ten years later Mr. Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski, now Mr. Joseph Conrad, stood upon the quarterdeck of his own ship, a master in the British merchant service. And a master he remained until "Almayer's Folly" won him fame and sent him ashore to write "An Outcast of the Islands" and "Lord Jim" and "Youth" and "Typhoon" and all the rest of those enthralling and memorable tales.

Conrad's book of fact is as formless as his fiction. He begins it in the middle and does not go back to the beginning until it is half done. We see him get his master's certificate long before we see him get his first glimpse of the sea. We hear how "Almayer's Folly" was written long before we hear a word about Almayer. On one page it is the year 1873 and young Joseph is descending the Furca Pass with his tutor. On the next page it is the year 1812 and Mr. Nicholas B——, granduncle to Joseph and *officier d'ordonnance* to Marshal Marmont, is retreating from Moscow and eating a dog *en route*. (Granduncle to Joseph, but father to Falk!) So the book appears as one proceeds, a string of dissentient episodes, a mixture of reminiscence and self-explanation, a thing of no apparent coherence or direction. But how vivid the picture when it is closed and put away! How magnificently Conrad has drawn himself, as he

drew Almayor, Jim, MacWhirr, Kurtz, Nostromo and Falk in days gone by! The notes of experience in "Youth," "Heart of Darkness" and "Typhoon," and above all, in "The Mirror of the Sea," fall into their ordered places; chaos becomes symmetry; a real man emerges.

And that real man, if I make no mistake, is the greatest artist writing in English today. Don't think that I here fall into a merely rhetorical hurrah, all sound and no sense. I am not forgetting Hardy and "Jude the Obscure," nor Moore and his superb memoirs, nor Kipling and "Kim," nor Wells and "The New Machiavelli," nor James and "What Maisie Knew," nor the honest stuff in the midst of Bennett's tinsel, nor the early work of Howells, nor the high points of such men as De Morgan, Chesterton, Masefield, Galsworthy and Shaw. But put the best of Hardy, Howells, Wells or James beside "Lord Jim," and the best of Hardy, Howells, Wells and James begins to go to pieces; and put the best of Kipling beside "Youth" or "Heart of Darkness" or "Typhoon," and you begin to sense Kipling's deficiencies. In one detail or another many of our current scriveners are far beyond Conrad. James, Wells and Kipling have vastly more humor; Howells and Hardy are nearer to the usual, the typical; Moore writes incomparably better English. But take him as he stands, Conrad shows more draft and beam than any of these. Better than the best of them he penetrates to the central fact of human existence—the fact, to wit, that life is meaningless, that it has no purpose, that its so-called lessons are balderdash—the capital discovery of our day and generation—the one supreme truth that must eventually revise and condition every other truth. In his stories you will find, for the first time in the history of the world, romance set free from sentimentality. He is, in short, not only a great artist, but also a great artistic revolutionist, and some day he will get his due. Meanwhile, as I have said, the great American public, overlooking entirely the very virtue which sets him above and apart from the whole rabble

of popular authors, threatens to take him to its arms as a new and delectable Stevenson, a super-Richard-Harding-Davis, a Dumas *de luxe*. Let it embrace him; he will survive the squeeze. And he will also survive his brief day.

Critical works now leer at us, chiefly critical works upon dramatists. Of Mr. Howe's "J. M. Synge" I have already spoken—a well meant and useful book, but one marred by unfortunate extravagances. To say that "The Playboy of the Western World" brought to the stage "the most rich and copious store of character since Shakespeare" is to say something so wholly preposterous that it scarcely deserves an answer. The same sort of over-enthusiasm crops up now and then in "THE BROWNING: THEIR LIFE AND ART," by Lilian Whiting (*Little-Brown*). The story of the poets' marriage is "the most beautiful romance that the world has ever known." Browning produced "the largest body of poetry, and the most valuable as a spiritual message, of any English poet." And so on and so on. The same nonsense has made Mrs. Eddy the greatest psychologist of all time. Browning's poetry, you may argue, is often vague, harsh, unbeautiful, incomprehensible. Ah, answer the Browningsites, but consider the philosophy beneath it! Allow something for those Great Truths! Well, just *what* great truths? Put them into plain words. . . . Do it for yourself, and you will find that they are seldom great and often not even truths. The poet's fundamental doctrines, indeed, may be reduced to a booming and hollow optimism—the same loose mixture of platitude and mysticism which now serves the turn of the New Thinkers. It was not by a mere coincidence that his chief American disciple, the late Prof. Hiram Corson, of Cornell, was also a believer in mental telepathy, table tapping and other such buffooneries. But, to return to Miss Whiting's book, it may be said for it that its extravagances are few and far between, that it reveals diligence in the accumulation of facts and care in the writing, and that no other available account of the Brownings is better done, or even so well done.

Two other useful handbooks are "HENRIK IBSEN: PLAYS AND PROBLEMS," by Prof. Otto Heller, of Washington University (*Houghton-Mifflin*), and "OSCAR WILDE: A CRITICAL STUDY," by Arthur Ransome, whose excellent account of Edgar Allan Poe I brought to your attention some time ago (*Kennerley*). Prof. Heller has written what will probably hold its own for more than a year or two as the most sagacious and comprehensive study of Ibsen in English. He sees clearly, as few have seen before him, that Ibsen must stand or fall with his social dramas, which began with "A Doll's House" in 1879 and ended with "John Gabriel Borkman" in 1896—that his earlier pieces, his "Brands" and "Peer Gynts," belong to Scandinavia rather than to the world in general. And assuming this at the start, the industrious Professor, with all that is best of German laboriousness, subjects those social dramas to a thorough examination, as stage plays, as pictures of human life and as contributions to a workday philosophy. He sees that they lack something in each respect—that they are sometimes clumsy in construction, that their people sometimes strain one's credulity, that the theses they seem to carry are often debatable, to say the least—but he also sees clearly how they excelled all plays that had gone before them, how they turned the conflict of the drama inward, and worked a complete revolution in play making, and left their mark upon every serious play coming after them. Altogether, a piece of criticism of very respectable quality, and entirely devoid of the customary obscurantism and rumble-bumble. Dr. Heller, it is obvious, belongs to that new lodge of college professors of which Dr. William Lyon Phelps of Yale is grand master. He is hospitable to ideas, he has a sturdy common sense, he has taken the trouble to investigate his subject at first hand, and he knows how to put his conclusions into lucid English.

Mr. Ransome's "OSCAR WILDE," like his "Poe," is a genuine critical study, and not a mere rhapsody in prose. He is ruthless, for example, in his dealing with Wilde's four comedies, despite the

fact that they are in greater favor at the moment than any other part of the great Irishman's literary legacy. He shows how much in them is weak yielding to playhouse convention and how much is mere smartness—the smartness, of course, of a man truly and phenomenally smart, but still mere smartness. Two-thirds of the witticisms in "An Ideal Husband" might be moved into "A Woman of No Importance" without perceptibly damaging either play. It is impossible, nine times out of ten, to connect a given epigram, by any sound psychological attachment, with the character voicing it. More than once, indeed, the conversation in one of these Wilde comedies brings the comedy itself to a standstill; even oftener than Congreve, his favorite model, Oscar allowed his wit to run away with his wits. But after all this is allowed for, and after similar and even worse blemishes in the tales and essays are discovered and allowed for, the fact remains that Wilde was a literary craftsman of the first consideration, who left behind him half a dozen indubitable works of art. We have nothing else that quite matches "Salomé." We have no finer ballad than that of Reading Gaol. And if we lost "Intentions," we should lose the most savory, the most impertinent, the most amazing English book of our time.

William Archer's "PLAY MAKING" (*Small-Maynard*) need not detain us. It warns the fledgling dramatist off a score of obvious shoals and it shows him a hundred obvious tricks of steering, but you will not find anything in it that is a new discovery, nor anything old that gathers much new force out of the author's experience. Mr. Archer is easily the foremost dramatic critic now flourishing in England, and I haven't the slightest doubt that he knows more about dramatic technique than any other living man, not even excepting Pinero and Jones, but here he has achieved nothing better than a hack job. Prof. Brander Matthews's "A Study of the Drama" is far more penetrating, and even so ponderous a tome as W. T. Price's "The Analysis of Play Construction" would probably give as much

practical help to the beginner. Better still, let him heave critics to the dogs and study plays—for instance, August Strindberg's "The Father," as it is translated in "AUGUST STRINDBERG: PLAYS," by Edith and Warner Oland (*Luce*). Three or four months ago I devoted an article to Strindberg and tried to convince you of his genius. Here you will find four of his plays—"The Father," "The Creditor," "Countess Julie" and "The Stronger"—all Englished before, but never Englished so well. If you want to see the difference, compare this new version of "The Father" with the familiar Erichsen version. Mr. and Mrs. Oland, indeed, make an almost ideal team of translators, for the former knows Swedish perfectly and the latter writes English gracefully, and both have practical knowledge of stage requirements. Much that is new and worth hearing is in the biographical preface to the volume.

Of the other new plays of the month, the most important by far is Frank Wedekind's "SUCH IS LIFE," translated from the German by Francis J. Ziegler (*Brown*). Here Wedekind, occasionally so bitter, is in a mood of broad burlesque. King Nicola of Umbria, deposed from his throne by rebels, ends his days as court fool to his successor, King Pietro, a former pork butcher. The scene is the Italy of the Middle Ages, but the barbed darts find all their targets in the Germany of today. It is a delicious *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole pompous piffle of royalty, and when it was first presented in Germany, with Wedekind himself in the role of the deposed king, it set the whiskers of the empire to wagging furiously. "WOMENKIND," by Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (*Macmillan*), is a one-act tragedy of the poor in the manner of those printed lately as "Daily Bread." Again grim irony is the dominant note, and again a fine artistry is in the dialogue. "THE TERRIBLE MEEK," by Charles Rann Kennedy (*Harpers*), is a piece of pious balderdash, with the gas man in a leading role and music by the author of "The Holy City." "THE NORSEMAN," by Elizabeth Alden Curtis (*Mosher*), is a harmless drama in high

school blank verse, beautifully printed and bound by the over-hospitable Mosher.

And so the space goes and none is left to do more than mention the books that remain, books as diverse in theme as those of the Bible, but each with something in it to make it worth while. For example, "LEE THE AMERICAN" (*Houghton-Mifflin*), by Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., an enormously painstaking review and summary of the whole Lee literature, by a friendly but still unsentimental critic. For example, "THE MUSICAL AMATEUR," by Robert H. Schaffler (*Houghton-Mifflin*), a thoroughly delightful celebration of the joys of fiddling and tooting, with shrewd and unorthodox reflections upon musical education. If you have ever played Haydn around the fire on a winter night, or gone on a dizzy journey through a new piano quintet, or tried to reduce Beethoven's Fifth to two violins, a piano, a 'cello and a flute, you will joy in Comrade Schaffler, with his brazen confession of youthful cornetting and his noble frenzy for old Ludwig. From music to high adventure—in "THE CABLE GAME," by Stanley Washburn (*Sherman-French*), a tale of dangerous reporting in the Black Sea during the electric days following the Japanese-Russian War. From high adventure to folklore—in "WHERE ANIMALS TALK," by R. H. Nassau (*Badger*), a curious collection of Uncle Remus tales from West Africa. From folklore to sly humor—in "MISS JOHN BULL," by Yoshio Markino (*Houghton-Mifflin*), the observations and impressions of a Jap at large in London society. And more yet—"THE BURDEN OF POVERTY," by Charles F. Dole (*Huebsch*), the gospel of a saner Socialism; "IN DEFENSE OF AMERICA," by Baron von Taube (*Swift*), the solemn labor of a solemn German, and "A FARMER'S NOTE BOOK," by C. E. D. Phelps (*Badger*), a thumbnail discourse on all things under the sun. I have got entertainment out of every one of these books, and instruction out of most of them, and so I wish that I could tell you more about them. But here is the end of my article for October—and in November I'll be hip deep in novels.

PARLOUS VIEWS FRANÇAIS?

By George Jean Nathan

THE current theatrical taste of a community is to be gauged most accurately not through its dramas but through its music halls.

Although this mischievous view has never before, to my knowledge, been bestowed upon a logically rheumatic populace, it yet persists as one of those perfectly veracious and patent statements for which, alas, no proof, no reason, may be assigned in satisfying terms of black and white. Like the curious circumstance, for instance, that a lonely far-off whistle wail of some steamship or locomotive invariably accents for us the sentiment of a melody we hear played in the twilight on some neighboring piano. Or the inexplicable fact that a girl with ill-turned ankles always pulls her skirts up when she seats herself while a girl with pretty ankles is always careful to adjust her skirts so as to conceal them. Or the fact that the most beautiful of musical instruments, the violin, has the ugliest physical aspect. Or the fact that the first impulse that comes to a woman who believes she can write is a longing to get out a book on Lafcadio Hearn. Or the facts that no man can be a philosopher of any order unless he possesses a keen understanding of the subtleties of physiology; that no one ever gets drunk on the internally intoxicating chianti of the Fattoria di Vico d'Arbia; that Rubens's painting of "The Judgment of Paris," with its fatty uneven *fraus* and incongruous tones, is art; that every mother's son of you, in reading Wells's splendid "New Machiavelli," skipped the superb section dealing with British politics; and that some people still cross the ocean on the ships of the American Line!

The relationship existing between the Parisian music hall and the composite taste of the boulevards I may describe as a sort of *double entente cordiale*. This is the true spirit, the true taste of theatrical Paris, at least as it has come to me today. And in my estimate I have not overlooked the Comédie Française, the Gymnase and the sterner domiciles where now and again one may be spectator at the dramatization of some other triangle than the familiar one composed of Him, Her and the Boudoir; nor the Variétés, the Guignol and the bolder, more unconventional inns where life is often treated as just one wedding party after another. Your critic who sagely makes assurance that the Frenchman vastly prefers that a spade be called a spade in his playhouse seems to me to be somewhat mope-eyed. The fact that here and there in the Gallic theaters a spade *is* called a spade does not argue that the Frenchman fancies such a designation above every other any more than the fact that a real Frenchman once went into Maxim's argues that Maxim's is a French restaurant.

Just as the mental picture of Paris that Americans conjure up consists principally of a girl dancing on top of a table at two o'clock in the morning (a sheer delusion and impossibility inasmuch as by two o'clock in the morning that girl is *under* the table), so does the mental picture of dramatic Paris seem to consist chiefly of a hotel, like the famous one in Atlantic City, where, so the word goes, they ring a bell at seven o'clock every morning to warn the guests that it is time to go back to their own rooms. As a result of this insistent conception,

the voyager who visits the majority of Gallic playhouses finds himself sorely perplexed. He observes that, in the greater number of cases, instead of calling a spade a spade, the French stage more often calls a spade "*la profession d'un Dago*" or something of the sort, which, as he does not understand French, the voyager guesses must mean something about chemises or nightgowns or *at least* silk stockings. So when he returns to his native soil, the voyager, upon being asked the nature of the plays he saw, winks his eye and smiles one of those condescending Cook's tourist smiles that, translated into Esperanto, signifies: "I'd like to tell you, but really you've gotta understand French to appreciate such things." Translated into plain, everyday American, you may lay your last louis that in nine cases out of ten all the Gaulish enlightenment that is back of the voyager smile is an acquaintance with a suggestive postcard purchased in front of the Café de la Paix in a manner that he was ingenuously made to believe was *sub rosa*.

I regret that I must take this parlor view of the French theatrical taste. For positive I am that this review would achieve the wider favor of my readers were it to take the old conventional American-critic-abroad tone to the effect that the three Parisian dramatic unities must ever be time, place and counterpane. Indeed, as you must appreciate, in taking a new position I am deliberately sacrificing the chance of quotation in the *Literary Digest*. "In every French play a bed occupies the principal position on the stage" is one of the juiciest cuds in the critical mouth, although whenever I run across it I know that its inditer is just the sort of theatrical commentator who, in writing about a musical comedy, will every once in a while say that "the performers seemed to be enjoying themselves in their work, which made the entertainment doubly enjoyable to the audience."

For then he was inspired, and from him came, As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore, Those oracles which set the world in flame, Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more: Did he not this for France, which lay before Bow'd to the inborn tyranny of years? . . .

Do not misjudge me, dearest Susan! I am not hazarding the contention that the French theatrical taste is becoming wholly holy, white and virtuous. Gee, gosh, no! I insist merely that *double entente* would appear to be supplanting *single entente* in popularity, and that instead of the old-fashioned bedstead the taste now runs to something that seems to be a bookcase but that, when pulled down, is really the old bed after all. This *double entente*, of course, is not always quite so refined, so delicate, as that of Jean Baptiste Greuze in his celebrated painting, "*La Cruche Cassée*," but it is *double entente*—and that is something. The bed is dead! Long live the davenport!!

On to the halls. First to Montmartre and into La Cigale, where we catch a "*revue*" styled "*Pourvu Qu'on Rigole*," one of the leading figures in which is our own Madge Lessing of former Casino days. A general idea of the entertainment here may be sensed from a turn in which Yvonne Harnold and M. Sinoel show Josephine and Napoleon doing stunts for the cinematograph; from a scene laid in the suburbs of Hades, where Henry Bataille the dramatist is discovered in close company with Carmen, Salome and such other warm babies; from a musical eulogium in tights to Bohemia gay Bohemia where all is so jolly and free; from a series of mimics by Mlle. Claudie de Sivry, a fritzi-scheffective minx, of conspicuous Parisian performers; and from two dozen familiar American songs masquerading as French. For instance:

*O cher petit téléphone,
Par qui, sans se voir,
Peuvent parler les personnes,
Aide-moi ce soir.
Mon fiancé me délaisse
Pour le vilain jeu;
Ton bouton que je presse
Va le rappeler en ce lieu,
En éveillant le son
D'un joyeux carillon,
Ring, ting-à-ling, ting-à-ling, gentil téléphone
Apporte à mon chéri,
Ring, ting-à-ling, ting-à-ling, gentil téléphone
Mon cœur et mon esprit;
Oh! Allol
Ring-ling-à-ling, ting-à-ling, dis-lui téléphone,
Que mon cœur fait aussi*

*Comme toi, ring-à-ling, ling-à-ling, à-ling,
à-ling,
Il fait ring-à-ling-à-ling pour lui.*

At the Olympia, another "*revue*." (Some day I am going to ask somebody just what a *revue* is, for as near as I have ever been able to judge, a *revue* seems to be thirty girls in short skirts, the mentioning during the course of the evening of the names of four or five well known figures in the contemporary public life, a drop curtain supposed to represent a railway station, whence everybody is going to the seashore, and the grand march finale in which the everlasting glory of the Swiss navy, the standing army of the Azores or something of the sort is proclaimed in song, cymbals and visible hosiery.) The *revue* at this particular playhouse is called "Enfin," and reveals, in addition to the stock events, Stella Flore in a creamy union suit posing out the attitudes of some of the Salon "art studies," a mimic of the fashion parade at Trouville and a few minutes each with Boccaccio, Hans Christian Andersen (who left the door open?) and Erckmann-Chatrian.

At the Marigny, that gayest of Gallic hothouses in whose spacious *promenoirs* bloom the fairest feminine wild flowers of Paris and where even Matthew White, Jr., would not be safe, we encounter still another *revue*, the most spectacular items in which are Mlle. Mado Minty undressed, Mlle. Kranil undressed, Mlle. Duparc undressed, Mlle. Nicette undressed and Mlle. Loys, also undressed. The leading sensation of the bill is the appearance, late in the evening, of Mlle. Jeanne Perriat fully clothed. Gaby Deslys "*et son danseur Harry Pilcer*" (as the billing is) was one of the program's resistance pieces at the time I sat in review, her specialty in this instance being the execution of the well known caleficient species of terpsichorean art that consists in biting off your partner's ear while the latter is busied trying to break your spine. The Deslys is still the same blonde torpedo of last year, a Gallic Mlle. Eva Tangué with tripled talent, a peroxide edition of Mrs. Patrick Campbell away on a vacation, a personified New Year's Eve at Jack's, a loaded

cigarette, a street vender's bunch of violets tied with a red ribbon, an electric fan whirring in a tub of hot water. It is difficult to define her. She is incongruous, hard to put the finger on, neither this nor that—yet she jerks herself across the footlights like an artist intrinsic. To be sure, like Flemish painting, she is brilliant only in qualities distinct from intellectual qualities (to appropriate from Baudelaire); she is as realistic to some as Echegaray's description of the nausea of the lock of hair of the Tarifena that touched the awakening palate of Don Juan, or as repellent to some as those quivering paragraphs of Conan Doyle relating (through the mouth of Hargrave, the surgeon) the case of the pink and white beauty of London and her reason for wearing only high-cut gowns. But, be her method as devious as that of the Allegheny River, like the river she manages to get there just the same. We must grant that much.

More *revue* at the Moulin Rouge, this lot being called "Tais-Toi! Tu M'Af-foles!" The plot of the entertainment here concerns itself with seeing how many times the scenes can be changed in three hours without making the scene shifters mad. Just what all the excitement was about I was not able to make out, although it seemed to me that it had to do with a free fight involving M. Prince, M. Moricey, Mlle. Nina Myral, Vavière de Leka, Mlle. Alice Guerra, Mlle. Paula de Alba and a dozen others to determine which one should stand in the spotlight. Just as one of the contestants seemed to be winning, bang—the scenes would be changed and the fight had to start all over again. The songs of this, like the songs of all the other *revues*, have been gathered from the scores of "The Wizard of Oz," "The Idol's Eye," "The Tourist," "Fantana" and other tune pieces of American make. At the Alcazar, *double entente* works hard in a *revue* entitled "Ce Que Je Peux Rire," among the leading performers in which are the "Sisters Philipps," who are billed as "*Les Deux Beautés Américaines*." With the exception of the fact that the Sisters Philipps are neither beauties nor Americans—and probably not sisters—

the billing may be said to be substantially correct. The entertainment is still another apotheosis of the House of Jaeger, with the scenes laid principally and appropriately at the seashore resort of Deauville. The Ambassadeurs discloses "En Avion, Marche!"—more *revue*, preceded by a vaudeville bill as tame as Arthur Symons's "Studies in Temperament," Dorothy Jardon's idea of Spanish dancing, the three-franc translations of Paul de Kock's novels, A. N. Whitehead's "Introduction to Mathematics," Winona Winter's high notes, R. G. K. Lempfert's opinions on "Weather Science," the Paris edition of the New York *Herald* or the New York *Herald*. The bill in question disgorges several soubrettes who take turns in making queer noises with the throat, the "Three Its—Juvenile Vocalists and Wooden Shoe Dancers," a tall lady who guillotines Victor Herbert's "Kiss Me" from "Mlle. Modiste," and a couple of Gallic comics who make one feel as put out with oneself as if one had just read through another novel by Robert Hichens.

The Jardin de Paris's most striking events seemed to me to be an equally infelicitous and morose session with vaudeville; a boxing exhibition by Mr. Frank Klaus, the champion-on-a-technicality middleweight, in which Mr. Frank Klaus demonstrated clearly that his pugilistic footwork is about on a level with, say, Professor Hyslop's psychological headwork; a squad of aged damsels who displayed their lingerie and so on in the self-imposed delusion that this constituted dancing; a harsh-visaged brunette who, during the intermission, volunteered in sonorous voice to disclose herself to you in "*poses plastique*" at a franc the half-dozen; and an unpainted, unpowdered, frightened little girl of eighteen or nineteen who played the piano in one of the *entr'acte* orchestras and who caught and held ten eyes out of every twelve for the substantial dramatic reason that she provided the same measure of contrast to everything else in the Jardin de Paris that is provided by a lonely little piece of carved Japanese ivory in a big curio cabinet filled to the

shelves' edges with brass or by Mr. George C. Tyler's peaceful, almost angelic countenance, and his views on dramatic critics.

In one of the music hall shows there is a song that goes something like this:

*Ah! Quel spectacle intéressant,
 Ebouffiant,
 Epastrouillant,
 Mirobolant,
 Effervescent,
 Incandescent,
 Attendrissant,
 Divertissant,
 Eblouissant,
 Etourdissant,
 Resplendissant,
 Retentissant;
 Ohé! Ohé! Ohé! Voilà le grand spectacle!*

The lyric represents with a fairly general accuracy the Parisian estimate of Henri Bernstein's latest drama "L'Assaut," current at the Gymnase. This is the play to be done in America under the title of "The Attack" by Mr. John Mason. If you have ever sat on the Hotel Astor roof garden and marvelled at the beauty of the full moon, only to discover after a while upon closer inspection that what you believed was the moon was a Spearmint electric sign, you will appreciate how I felt when I regarded the play through the secondhand appraisal of it and subsequently took a good close look at it and saw it for what it was worth. I have seen many bad plays in my time; I have even seen "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine"—but I have seen few sillier, emptier, shallower, more purposeless, more futile spectacles than this. "Sardou's plan of playwriting," says Shaw, "is first to invent the action of his piece and then to carefully keep it off the stage and have it announced merely by letters and telegrams." Bernstein's plan of playwriting is first to discover an actor with a stout pair of lungs and then to get a stagehand to drop the curtain while that actor is yelling his head off at a quarter after ten. Bernstein never has anything to say, and is therefore an apostle of noise. He knows how to build a play in the old-fashioned manner, and so persons with no knowledge of how easy a task it is to build such a play have

praised him for it in copious adjectival hemorrhages. This same class of persons still admires the species of dramatic situation that goes like this:

RUPERT (*suddenly riveting his eyes on her, seizes her by the wrist and demands in a low sibilant tone*)—You don't mean—

GWENDOLYN (*interrupting him, with averted eyes and nodding her head slowly*)—Yes.

To prove to the audience that there is really a plot to "L'Assaut," the management has outlined its idea of what the piece is about in a few hundred words on the program. The first sentence runs as follows: "*Le premier acte se passe dans la maison de campagne qu'occupe Alexandre Méritail avec ses deux fils, Daniel et Julien, sa fille Georgette et une amie de celle-ci, Renée de Rould.*" Anyone who has ever lived in the country and solved a patent medicine advertisement puzzle that had to do with supplying the missing letters in the name Ge-rg- Wash--gton, being assisted with a hint in the generous advertisement that the name was that of the first president of the United States, will be able to gather a great deal of the play matter from this solitary, not very communicative, but-remember-it's-Bernstein sentence. Yes, Alec and Renée—that's right! The one *insouciant* touch to the piece lies in Alec's age (53) and in Renée's (19) virtue. I must decline to go further into the "plot" or its handling. To be stupid is sin; to assist in the furtherance of stupidity by quotation is double sin. "L'Assaut," in brief, is precisely the kind of drama that is chosen for discussion as a perfect model of playwriting by societies that meet in hotels on Sunday nights in order to get names in the papers and drinks without having to buy a sandwich. Lucien Guitry originated the role of Méritail, and was succeeded in it by an entirely capable understudy, M. Duquesne.

For years, every now and again in the publicity bulletins of plays and novels, there has confronted my vision the descriptive adjective "spicy." And for years I have enlisted my fullest intelligence to penetrate to its exact meaning. Recourse to the dictionary:

SPICY, a. Fragrant, aromatic, piquant, smart.

Examination of the works themselves has failed to reveal to me any qualities that seemed appropriately to be described by the word or its synonyms. If a husband discovers that his wife has been making goo-goo eyes at the coachman, I fail to see how the fiction effect is either fragrant or aromatic. If a model tells an artist that she cannot marry him but that she will become his mistress, I fail to deduce how the thing is either piquant or smart. Had the model told the artist that she would *not* become his mistress, we should, indeed, have had something both piquant and smart, but certainly not as the matter stands. The whole case has baffled me. I have been told that "spicy" means "naughty." But in place of naughtiness, I have found vulgarity—and naughtiness is never vulgar, save when persons are given to affectations or live in poor neighborhoods or cannot understand the native German point of view or fail to be discriminating as to the vintage of their beverages. Paris and Binghamton, N. Y., are the only two communities I have ever visited where the word "spicy" has seemed to be least abused and where its definition has seemed most satisfactorily unveiled for me. With Paris as our sole present text, "spicy," as analyzed through the medium of the exhibits at the Grand Guignol, the Variétés and their little sister playplaces refers to the effect of an acute delineation of the emotions and actions of apt human beings when the policeman is on the beat. In American literature of stage and library what is termed "spicy" is often merely the portrayal of the emotions and actions of dunderheads when the policeman is *not* on the beat. In other words, when an American writer wishes his characters to be "spicy" he usually succeeds only in making them lawless; while the Frenchman never forgets for an instant that in life it is silly and foolish and unsafe to break the law when you can bribe the policeman. I trust I am not too involved for you. I myself understand what I am talking about anyway—and that is something on a lot of dramatic critics.

However, let me give you a sample from the Variétés. Title, "Les Joies de Plein Air." So as not unnecessarily to shock anyone, I must ask you to translate it into the vernacular—if you can. A good-looking but somewhat incautious young damsel meets a fine and persuasive stranger to whom she is forthwith attracted. "A visit with me to the beautiful Bois de Vincennes, *ma chérie*?" "With profound pleasure, *mon cher ami*!" They go. They sit on the pretty green grass. He kisses her. She kisses him. He embraces her. She embraces him. They embrace each other. . . . The keeper of the forest suddenly confronts them. He threatens immediate arrest. The girl, startled, scared, fearing the exposure of what has happened, hands over all her money and jewelry to the keeper, urges him to let her go and, at his nod, runs away. And then her escort and the "keeper," his accomplice, begin to divide the spoils. The realism of the piece, I must admit, is damaged somewhat by the timely arrival of the police at this juncture.

The Grand Guignol in the dark Rue Chaptal, as my readers must know, is unique among the theaters of Europe. Its bills are made up of five different playlets, thrilling, laughing, thinking, teasing, surprising in turn, each interpreted with gratifying care and rare precision. The ten plays most recently shown have been "Les Ingrats," by Jean Martel; "La Bienfaitrice," by Paul Giafferi; "L'Esprit Souterrain," from the novel of Dostoiewsky; "Le Grand Match," by Leroy and Cartoux; "Pendant Armistice," by Charmain out of Guy de Maupassant; and "Le Sacrifice," by Aguzan out of Henri Duvernois. And "Rosalie," by Max Maurey, director of the Guignol; "La Matérialisation de Miss Murray," by F. de Nion; "L'Attaché," by Gréjois and Tallet; "Le Chemin de Ronde," by Francheville; and "Hue! Cocotte!" by Nanteuil and Faverne. It has long been my ardent prayer that we might witness the inauguration of such a playhouse in New York; the Comedy Theater would serve the purpose magnificently; suitable pieces would readily present themselves;

and thus might it be given us to sit in attendance upon some of the most interesting drama that is now refused us because certain authors' ideas "ain't long enough to make a full evening's entertainment," as managerial wisdom hath it; because the vaudeville halls will tolerate nothing more stimulating than putty noses, xylophone solos and remarks on the baldheadedness of Sam the orchestra leader; and because on general principles it usually takes all save one of our theatrical purveyors six or seven years to arrive at the conclusion that there may be other authentic and intelligent dramatic novelties in the world beside a new scenic theory, a Wall Street play in which the hero's stock does not conveniently jump back to par again in the third act, and a chorus maneuver in which the last girl in the line to dance off the stage does not stick her right leg up in the face of the audience. In such a theater we might see a dramatization of Mr. Gouverneur Morris's little masterpiece "The Claws of the Tiger"; a faithful rather than a vaudeville dramatization of Mr. Jack London's short story "To Kill A Man"; an exposition of a certain theme that has been lodged, so I hear, in the head of Mr. Eugene Walter these two years gone; a view of something genuinely amusing that Brother Mencken has secreted in his noddle; the worthiest of the now and again very worthy one-act plays written by native dramatists for the private delectation of the Lambs' Club; a dramatic edition of "Vive Le Roi!" one of the purest little romances published by this or any other magazine in several years. What a plethora of riches! What a chest of gold buried in the sands of oversight and inadvertence!

It is a matter for my sharpest regret that I cannot go at spacious length here into the methods and deeds of the Guignol. For here is probably one of the few drama abodes on the sphere where Dumas, *fils*, might have been convinced he was in error when he observed that for three thousand years there has not been a dramatic author audacious enough to write a play, even in one act, where parents are approved for objecting

to the marriage of their daughter with the man she loves; where he would have changed his opinion that "on the stage the men that women love are always those that they should love"; where Bernard Shaw might at last discover with the rest of us a military drama in which the commander of the army is not superseded at the critical moment by his daughter; where, to adapt Wilde's estimate of James Payn, we do not invariably come upon a procession of playwrights whose mission in life for the most part is to become adept in the art of concealing what is not worth finding; and where there are brave Coleridges to say of Rabelais: "I could write a treatise in praise of the moral elevation of his work which would make the Church stare and the conventicle groan and yet which would be the truth and nothing but the truth." Originality, skill and courage adorn the creed of the Guignol. May its bank balance grow fat!

A weak glimpse at a few of the Guignol pieces. "Rosalie" is the comedy of an ill treated servant who, biding her time, brings her employers to toe the line while the Important Guest freezes his feet on the doorstep. "The Materialization of Miss Murray" is of a young man who is driven temporarily out of his head by the tragic death of his fiancée. He believes he sees her ghost ever beckoning to him. The family call in a renowned specialist. What to do? The specialist assures them that experiments in essentially similar cases have demonstrated that like will cure like. They must rig up a girl to look like Miss Murray, let her appear to the young man as the spirit self of his fiancée and assuage his grief and restore his mind with words bathed in the melody of comfort. Everything is made ready. The mother, shaking in fear, begs the physician to assure her that the test can work no harm. The physician gruffly assures her that he knows what he is doing. The young man is brought in. The curtains slowly part and—with a scream, the lad falls to the floor dead.

"Hue! Cocotte!" treats of a wife who

shows her husband that what is Worcestershire for the gander is Worcestershire for the goose—and not merely mayonnaise. "During the Truce" is the tale of two simple old Frenchmen who, during the days of war, steal out of the fortifications of Paris in order to fish food out of the Seine for their hungering families. A squad of German soldiers come upon them. The lieutenant questions them. They are innocent enough. He leaves them. The two, breathing relief, return to the baiting of their hooks. . . . The tramp of feet. The Germans reappear. The lieutenant orders the old Frenchmen to stand up and face him. "We have treated you well," he tells them; "our colonel asks me to beseech you to treat us equally well." The old fellows look at each other. What does the German mean? They are not left long in doubt. The password into the fortifications. No, no, no! Yes!! "Never!" exclaims Patureau, the elder. The lieutenant cries out an order. Patureau is led off into the woods and shot. The soldiers return. The lieutenant demands the password of Marinon. Marinon, quivering and hushed and pale as a fish's belly, refuses. The lieutenant tells him to remember his wife, his children—and what has just happened to his comrade. Marinon wavers; he begs for mercy, for the justice of the truce; but his palate chokes back the countersign. The lieutenant again cries out an order. Marinon crouches against the wall. A dozen rifles click—another order—a dozen rifles spit fire—and Marinon falls riddled and splintered. "Shoulder arms! Forward march!" Curtain.

"The Big Match" is the tale of what happens to a prizefighter who is too fond of the fair sex; "The Benefactress" the tale of a generous Mrs. Warren who calls herself Madame de Maintenon; and "The Ingrates" the tale of a bibulous father-in-law who steals the gift bed out of his daughter's newly furnished house on her wedding night. Stuff to tickle heart and head and spine and funny-bone!

PRIZE TITLE CONTEST

\$100 for the Best Title

ON page 63 of this issue of *THE SMART SET* is a story without a title—a dashing, nerve stirring story of action by Robert Emmet Mac-Alarmey, that carries you along with a speed like that of the big motor car that plays such an important part in the narrative.

In publishing this story without a name, and offering prizes for the best eleven titles submitted by competitors, it is the purpose of the editors to stimulate interest among readers and afford them the intellectual exercise and amusement of trying for themselves to hit upon a title which most cleverly and happily expresses the idea that they get from reading the story.

The selection of a satisfactory title for a piece of fiction is always a difficult and delicate matter, especially, as in the present case, if one desires to get away from such a hackneyed form as "The Woman Detective"—which might possibly first suggest itself as an appropriate title. But we wish to stimulate the imagination of our readers, and so we are asking them to propose some title with more originality, freshness and cleverness. The original name of this story was "The Skirt," which of course is excluded from the competition.

Many a novel owes a considerable portion of its success to an effective title, which often attracts the casual purchaser as he sees the volume lying on a bookstall. The same is true of the drama; many a play has failed under one name and succeeded later under another. There is always, therefore, a keen hunt for a "snappy" title, which may be some telling phrase taken from the author's language, some appropriate metaphorical allusion or some combination of words that will

strike briefly and concisely at the very root of the basic idea of the narrative.

For the best title submitted on or before October 15, *THE SMART SET* will award a prize of \$100, and for the ten other titles, which in the estimation of the judges are considered next best, ten prizes will be awarded, each in the form of a year's subscription to *THE SMART SET*, the price of which is \$3.00. Should two or more send titles which in the opinion of the judges are equal in merit, then the first prize of \$100 will be divided equally among such winning competitors.

Titles must not contain more than six words, and should be written distinctly on a sheet of paper, containing nothing else except the contestant's name and address.

Submitted titles must be received on or before October 15.

Not more than one answer from each contestant—the first received—will be considered.

The judges will be the editors of *THE SMART SET* and their decision will be final. No one on the staff of the magazine will be permitted to compete either directly or indirectly.

It is not necessary to be a subscriber to *THE SMART SET* in order to compete; the contest is open to everyone.

Within one week from October 15 a check will be mailed to the winner, and the result of the competition will be announced in the December number of *THE SMART SET*, which will be published November 15.

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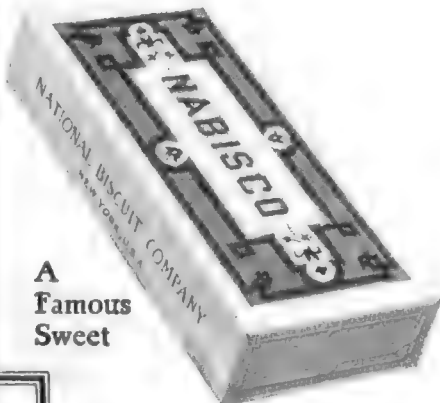


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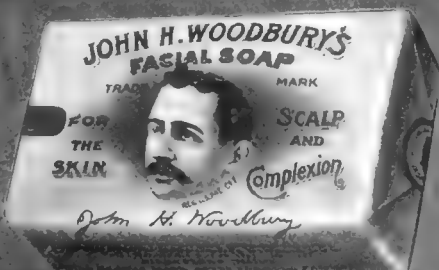
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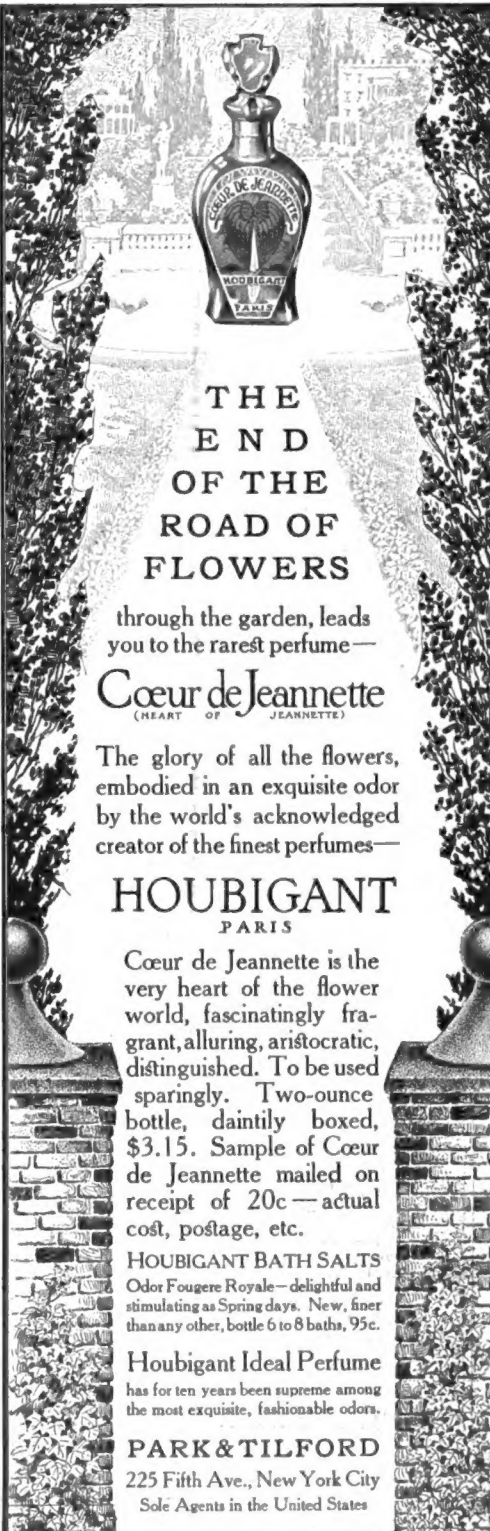
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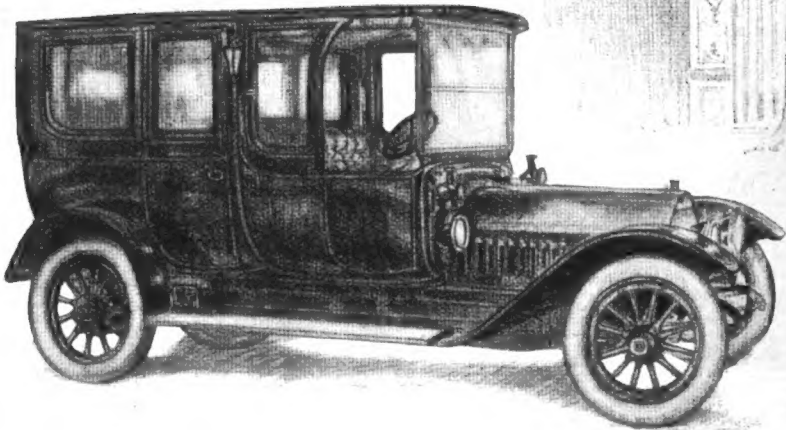
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